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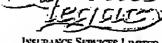
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Nº 3,210

COMMENT Polly Toynbee: why I loathe Portillo's mean tribe



THE TABLOID

MONDAY 3 FEBRUARY 1997

Peter Gabriel: inside his interactive world



SPORT **England triumph:** in the 20-page sports tabloid



Euro plan will cut Britain out

Sarah Helm Brussels

Prance and Germany have agreed to set up a powerful new political body to make European economic policy, which would exclude Britain if it stays outside the single currency.

After months of secret negotiations, France and Germany have hammered out agreement on a "stability council" to govern the euro zone, senior officials in Bonn have told Under the deal, both sides

have pledged that no formal announcement on the shape of the council will be made until near the launch of monetary union. But details obtained by The Independent confirm British

government fears that exclusion

Exclusive

Only countries who joio harmonisation, German offi-

The council, consisting of finance ministers of the EMU

states, will also reach agreements amongst themselves on enforcement of the rules and

from monetary union would deprive Britain of influence over key decisions affecting the country's future.

monetary union will be part of the stability council, which looks certain to become the most powerful economic club in Europe, after the single currency launch in 1999. The council will be styled on the G7, the Group of Seven industrial nations, and will meet regularly to set strategy on exchange rates, employment and issues such as tax

Inside

fines governing the euro-zone, under the stability pact. The future European central bank may be invited to meetings of the stability council, which are expected to take place several times a year. They will proba-

bly happen just before the reg-

ular meetings of the European

Union's finance ministers council in Brussels or Luxembourg. Officials say it has not yet been decided whether to invite the European Commission to sit oo the stability council. "We have not thought about whether the commission should be there - maybe they should," one of-

ficial said. Germany has been re-

sisting a French proposal for a

full-blown "economic govern-

Labour and single currency, page 2 A triumph of business and lunch. page 15

ment" for the euro-zone, saying the idea could threaten the independence of the future central bank. The commission is opposed to any informal power centre which could undermine its influence over European policy.

However, following months of intense negotiations between France and Germany, a compromise over the stability council has now been struck. "We now have agreement on how the council will work," said a senior

German official. Both the German Bundesbank, and the European Monetary Institute, the central bank in waiting, are understood to have accepted the

blueprint. Speaking at the world ecocomic forum in Davos, Switzerland, at the weekend, Theo Waigel, the German Finance Minister, and Jean-Claude Trichet, governor of the French central bank, for the first time publicly voiced strong support for the idea.

cy among governments inside the euro-zone. "This kind of body makes sense for countries in the third stage of economic and currency union," said Mr Waigel, referring to the single currency launch. 'A stability council would be an informal body with no decision-making power," he added, playing down fears that the council could become a serious political counter-weight to the central

council would coordinate poli-

"hard-core" Europe is evolving which could lead to Britain's permanent isolation. Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, has said he is "wary" of

making for the euro-zone should be set by the council of European finance ministers, on which Britain has a seat. The stability council, however, will operate outside the EU treaties, which means Britain will have an power to influence discussions. Britain's partners

are showing increasing frustra-

tion with the Government's in-

transigence over further

outside EMU, Mr Clarke has

argued that economic policy-

power-sharing and have now bank. The Franco-German deal shown they are determined to will fuel fears in Britain that a move shead alone, even if this means pooling more powers outside the treaties.

"if Britain is worried about isolation they should join in monetary union," said one seany plan for a stability council which would exclude countries

Comment13-15

Foreign News 10-12

Home News 2-9

Leading Articles13

Paris over the powers of the new council. French integrationists wanted the council to be granted decision-making authority with direct political powers to influence the European central bank. However, Germany insisted that nothing

would be done which affected the bank's independence and its sole right to agree monetary policy, as set out under the Maastricht treaty. As a result it was agreed that the stability council should be set up without any institution-

al structure or formal powers. and without a secretariat. Bonn has, however, accepted that the council will enter into "dialogue" with the central bank nior German source. The Fran- which cannot "act in a political co-German deal involved a vacuum", Bonn officials say.

Arts Reviews23

Crossword22

Feature 6-8

NHS patients being left to starve

lan Burrell

Patients are being left to starve m hospitals because they are unable to feed themselves, according to a disturbing report to be published today.

Relatives have complained that some patients have been left to die because they are unable to reach their food. Sick children and young but seriously disabled patients have

also heen left to starve. The report, by official health watchdogs, has been sent to Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary. It blames the fall in the number of nurses, changes in hospital catering arrangements and lack of staff training in the value of nutrition for the

very disturbing problem".

The Independent has seen a copy of the report which follows a ten-month national inquiry by

the Association of Community Health Councils. The results will be announced later today by Toby Harris, the ACHC chairman, who said last night that he hoped to discuss the matter with

ministers shortly. He said that relatives believed that people were being left to starve to death. "The relatives know the patients better than the medical and nursing staff and they may well he right. We should certainly take that

concern very seriously." Officials have been taken aback by the results of their investigatinn which began as a "casual inquiry".

The report warns: "Relatives have raised concerns that patients are not being fed properly because they are elderly - they

QUICKLY

Page 2

∠ If you were expected to recover, you ate, if

not, you were left to fade away 🤊

there was a policy on that ward that if you were expected to recover, you were helped to eat, if not, you were left to fade

Another, from Wakefield, said: "My father would not have refused artificial feeding, he was compliant with anyare being left to die through lack thing that was asked of him by of food." One respondent from doctors. I am distraught that my Kent told the study: "We feel father should have been doctors. I am distraught that my

ticularly when someone dies. There is clear evidence that this effect everyone going into hospital, not just elderly people."

Angeline Burke, the study's author, writes that hired catering staff often have sole re-

abandoned in this way."

The report concludes: "Pa-

tients going hungry in hospital

is a very emotive subject, par-

sponsibility for feeding patients.

They are not always made aware of the specific needs and requirements of individuals and are not expected to ask patients if they need assistance nr why they have left a meal.

One relative told the study: "Her meals were simply dumped in front of her on a bed-table, in extremely hot covered steel dishes, and being blind as well as elderly and unwell, she was not even able to

find her food, let alone remove istered nurses qualified and it the hot covers and discover what she had."

Another relative, in Newcastle, said: "Even when the table was in front of my mothis a very real problem that can er she could not feed herself properly and we found her more than once eating with her hands. When she did manage to get food to her mouth half of it would fall out."

Some staff admitted they had contributed to the problem. A community nurse from Leicester tald the study: "I confess I have been one of those nurses who have placed food on the patient's bedtable, but with every good intention of returning to help. Why did I not return?"

The study points out that the number of registered nurses on hospital wards has fallen dra-

it is noticeable that tickets have

been easier to buy recently as

the public's appetite for musi-

that the withdrawal of nurses has gone too far. Trained nurses, not volunteers or relatives should be responsible for en-

is estimated that only 9,000

CHCs, relatives and other pa-

tients' representatives believe

The report notes: "Many

will qualify by 1997-98.

suring that patients eat and drink ennugh when they are in The problem is not confined

tn general hospitals. Aylesbury Vale CHC, which munitors the National Spinal Injuries Centre voiced serious concerns. "Many [patients] are young

people with healthy appetites despite their disability and yet we have experienced pattents having to wait for meals because there are insufficient staff to feed patients who are totally dematically - in 1983, 37,000 reg- pendent," a spokesman said.

out between Sir Andrew and the

proposed Norma, the film star

Faye Dunaway, after Lloyd

Webber failed to be satisfied

Lloyd Webber's Sunset show reaches the end of its boulevard

A £50m government initiative ployment by 130,000 this year has been such a "fiasco" that ministers no longer speak of its existence.

Job scheme 'fiasco'

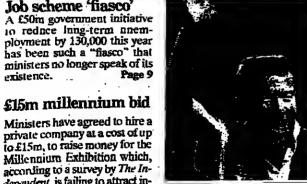
Ministers have agreed to hire a private company at a cost of up to £15m, to raise money for the Millennium Exhibition which. according to a survey by The Independent, is failing to attract interest from leading British

companies. Albanian beatings

Albanian authorities have rounded up, arrested and beaten hundreds of young men all over the country, sending some for "special treatment" in the capital. Thana, and herding the rest into local po-Page 12

Peru peace hopes

Hopes for a peaceful end to the Peruvian hostage crisis rose after a meeting in Toronto between Peru's President Alberto Fujimori and Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, Mr Fujimori said preliminary talks with Tupac Amaru guerrillas occupying the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima would begin soon.



Shearer three-timer

Alan Shearer (above) socred three times in the last 13 minutes vesterday as Newcastle came back from 3-1 down to win 4-3 at home at home against Leacester City. His scoring feats could cost bookmakers a small fortune. Shearer is now five teams away from scoring against every team in the Premiership this season - a feat quoted at 500-1 back in August. Sport tabloid



David Lister Arts News Editor

Sunset Boulevard, the Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, is to close in both London and New York, it was announced yesterday. . The surprise decision was

made by his Really Useful Group over the weekend. it marks an ominous start to the year for musical theatres, with the West End musical of The Who's Tommy also closing because of a fall off in audiences. Already this year Sir Andrew has seen a postponement

of the Broadway opening of his newest musical Whistle Down The Wind following a lukewarm reaction to its Washington opening. And he has reduced the 95-strong staff at the Really Useful Group by 18,

including senior executives. He was not commenting yesterday on the shock closure of Sunset Boulevard. But James Thane, head of the Really Useful Theatre Company, said it



was because of the difficulties of casting the lead role, Norma Desmond, the fading and ageing silent screen star who falls in love with a younger man. The role is currently being played by Petula Clark in London and by Flaine Page in New York, making her Broadway debut.

had to be revamped last year after failing to attract audiences. In New York the production of Sunset Boulevard has not attracted audiences in sufficient numbers, and it was reported to have lost £200,000 in one month. It will close in March. The Loodon production will close on 5 April.

The production of Sunser Boulevard, directed by Trevor Nunn, soon to be head of the National Theatre, contains one of Sir Andrew's best scores and has won critical plaudits. Yet it has a troubled history. The £3.5m-plus show was closed after a few months for a further £im to be spent on it. The first Norma Desmond, the actress Patti LuPone, fell out with Sir Andrew after she was not giv-

cals has lessened. Sir Cameron with her singing ability. Mackintosh's Martin Guerre While the history of the production could almost make a musical in itself, the official rea-

son being given for closure vesterday seemed strange even by show business standards. The role of Norma Desmond is a demanding one, but there is no shortage of fine musical theatre actresses, and this was clearly a show intended to run for some James Thane said: "We have

decided to end the show on a high starring Petula Clark. in the character of Norma Desmond, Andrew Lloyd Webber has created one of the most demanding female roles ever in musical theatre. This makes casting incredibly difficult. The public expect a certain stature of the artist in the role and to continue beyond Perula's conen the New York transfer. For tract would risk compromising However, while the London the Los Angeles opening there an extraordinary series of production has been seen by two was an even more public falling-bravura performances.

CONTENTS

Business & City ...17-19 Arts4

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Kate Winslet senses another film triumph

David Lister Arts News Editor

The star of Michael Collins, the controversial film about the murdered IRA hero. look one of the top prizes at a film-awards ceremony last

Liam Neeson was voted best actor by the jury of film critics at the Evening Standard Films Award.

went to Kate Winslet, enjoying remarkable success for an actress who is still only 21.

The awards celebrate British film-making, and this year there was considerable diversity to celebrate, with award-winners including films of Shakespeare, Jane Austen and Thomas Hardy, tales of underclass junkies and an IRA leader, and a star of the Carry On movies.

Liam Neeson received his award from the American actress Jessica Lange. The Neil Jordan film, a joint UK/US production, opened last year to controversy, with claims that it had glamorised the life and career of Collins.

The award for best film went to Richard III, which featured Sir lan McKellen's interpretation of the king as a neo-fascist. Tony Burrough, production designer on the film, won best technical achievement award.

The rise to stardom of Kate Winslet, unknown 18 months ago, continues.

Winslet, who was nominated for an Oscar last year for Sense and Sensibility, won best actress last night for her performances in both Sense and Sensibility and Jude, the latter an adaptation of Thomas Hardy's Jude The Obscure.

She is currently staring as Ophelia in the Kenneth Branagh film of Hamlet.

Emma Thompson, who adapted Sense and Sensibility (as well as acting in it), shared best screenplay award with John



Emma Thompson (left) in Sense and Sensibility with Kate Winslet, who was voted best actress for her roles in the Austen adaptation and in Jude

Hodge for Trainspotting, the film of Irvine Welsh's story of Edinhurgh low life.

Mark Herman, writer and di-rector of Brassed Off. a film about a colliery hand at a pit earmarked for closure, won the
Peter Sellers comedy award, and
The jury of British film critis white. This film won top
prize at the Cannes Film Fes-

Emily Watson was judged best newcomer for Breaking The Waves, an epic love story between a Calvinist girl from a small Scottish community and an oil-rig worker.

pored one of the great British successes of the year, Mike Leigh's Secrets and Lives, the poignant and comic tale of an adopted black girl who traces her natural mother and finds she

tival last year. It is not the first time that the judges for this award have made an odd deci-

A few years ago they ignored Neil Jordan's The Crying Game, which won an Oscar.

of the night was for Leslie Phillips, when the veteran ac-tor and a star of the Carry On films received the special achievement award, It was presented to him hy Joan Plowright, the actress and wid-

British industry cold shoulders Greenwich millennium plans

Christian Wolmar and Sam Coates

Ministers have agreed to hire a private company at a cost of up to £15m, to raise money for the Millennium Exhibition which according to a survey by The Independent, is failing to attract interest from major British companies.

IMG, which raises sponsorship money for the Olympics. has been hired to bring in the £15(tm needed to ensure the future of the scheme.

While 1MG's expertise is seen as essential, it comes at a high price. Colin Tweedy director general of the Associa-tion of Business Sponsorship of the Arts said: "IMG is absolutely essential. Without them, Milleunium Central would not have a car in hell's chance of getting the money. With them, they've got a good chance, but it will be very expensive. Normally, they charge between 5 and 10 per cent [£7.5m to £15m] but possibly as Millennium Central is govern-ment backed, they might get it

A survey conducted by The Independent found that of 40 of

initely be supporting the Greenwich Millennium project. Just under half of those which replied said they had no plans to contribute to the Government's millennium plans. The remainder said they were still in discussions as to whether to support the scheme.

The Exhibition organisers. Millennium Central, now headed by Jenny Page, formerly the chief executive of the Millennium Commission, have turned to IMG to raise the money.

According to insiders, the past year's attempt at raising the private money has been a disastrous failure. First, there was Michael Heseltine's attempts to hludgeon companies into giving money, and then there were three months of political uncertainty.

One source said: "We have a lot of catching up to do. Many companies were put off by the doubts over the scheme, but we remain hopeful. Even when things were at their worst, we had Japanese companies ringing up and saying they were interested in putting in money."

Some of the biggest British companies have rejected

Alliance Insurance Group. which will not be supporting the dome in any way, said: "It is not the most effective way for us to talk to our customers". Mining company RTZ said "we have a firm policy on what we spend money on in that sort of area; we aim to set up long term partnerships in education.

environment and world affairs." Others, such as Guinness and Standard Chartered, said that most of their husiness is conducted overseas and it is inappropriate to support events solely in Britain.

Even many of those companies supporting the project, will he making only small donations. For example, Michael Heseltine announced in July of last year that top city institutions, such as Barclays, Lloyds, Midland and NatWest would be joining the City of London Corporation in supporting the Millennium. In fact they have jointly agreed to sponsor a pavilion in one of the 12 "time zones" under the new Greenwich dome. The pavilion will cost around £12m, half of which is being paid for by the City of London, leaving about a dozen hanks and city institu-

spokesman for the Royal & Sun £6m towards the government's scheme. Similarly, a spokesman for the Woolwich huilding society, which is committed in principal to giving some mon-ey to the exhibition, said "our contribution will be very small".

Further bad news for the organisers came from British Telecom. While the company is planning to make one of the most substantial contributions, thought to he approaching £12m, it has asked that none goes toward the Greenwich dome or any other London project. A spokesman for the company said: "our interest is very specifically with the broader national celebrations".

Several other companies, especially those based outside the capital, have refused to support the London project, instead opting to give money towards regional projects. Railtrack has donated £4m towards the Hungerford Bridge project, and Severn Trent Water will be donating money towards projects in Birmingham.

IMG is likely to focus on the very hig multinationals, rather than these reluctant British companies. Mr Tweedy said: "You really need some hig play-Britain's largest companies, the project altogether. A tions contributing a total of just ers. It's a lot of money."

Calls for fresh Bloody Sunday inquiry grow

James Cusick

There is mounting pressure on the Government to reinvestigate the Bloody Sunday shootings in Londonderry 25 years ago. As an anniversary march of

20,000 people took place in the lown where 14 people from the nationalist community were shot dead by British soldiers, John Hume, the Social Democratic and Labour Party leader, claimed that the Prime Minister,John Major, had accepted those who died were innocent victims and had not been car-

rying weapons or bombs. Mr Hume, along with the Irish Prime Minister, John Bruton, and Sinn Fein, effectively formed a unified trinity to force Mr Major into setting up an independent inquiry into the killings. The earlier inquiry by Lord Chief Justice Widgery which accepted that the Para-chute Regiment soldiers had acted lawfully when they were called to an anti-interment demonstration in Derry - is in-

creasingly seen as being deficient.
With the emergence of new evidence, claiming that there were other soldiers involved and that the nationalist crowd had been fired on from above as well as from the paratroopers on the ground, a full-scale interna-

Labour could enter the single

currency by 2002, Cook says

tional investigation, along the lines of the Mitchell Commission, may be considered.

Before the anniversary march, which attracted the largest crowd ever to commemorate the deaths. Mr Hume made an impassioned plea for peace. He said the ahandonment of violence was the best tribute that could be paid to the 14 victims. Mr Hume is co-ordinating new evidence to present to the Government and said he was hopeful there would be a fresh

inquiry soon. Mitchel McLaughlin, a senior Sinn Fein member, called for "the truth about Bloody Sunday" to be brought out in the

The marchers included relatives of the men who died. The route followed that of the 1972 demonstration from the Creggan

Estate to Free Derry Corner. Michael McKinney, whose brother was one of those shot dead by the paratroopers, said the outcry over Bloody Sunday would not go away. "[Sir Patrick]Mayhew [the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland] can keep his head in the sand for as long as he wants, but when he gets up again, the relatives of Bloody Sunday will still be here to spoil his day."

essary majority for them of France and Germany alone."

out the Government's opposi-

tion to the European Social

Chapter tomorrow in a keynote

pressed by the party's cam-

the Tories.

John Major, who is due to set

significant shorts

Two men held after £4m heroin haul

Two men are due to appear in court today after customs and police officers said they had seized heroin worth £4m

and police officers said they had selzed heroin worth Evan in a combined operation.

Sarwan Gill Singh, 61, of Leeds, West Yorkshire, and Gurcharan Singh, 46, also of Leeds, were yesterday charged with being knowingly concerned with the import of 20kg of the drug. The two men, who are not related, will face magistrates at Leeds, Sarwan Singh's wife, Baljita, was

released on police bail.

Police said yesterday that they were arrested last Friday after a six-week operation in Leeds.

Not a penny of their own

The number of unemployed 16- and 17-year-olds without any meome has increased by 24,000 over the past year, a report showed yesterday.

Those out of work and receiving no benefit has reached 160,500, according to an analysis of government figures by the Unemployment Unit and Youthaid. The figures, for the three months to November 1996, mean that 89 per ceat of all unemployed 16- and 17-year-olds have no form of income, said the report.

The total number of 16- and 17-year-olds without a job was 181,000, the highest figure ever recorded for an

Hotel grades made easy

The English Tourist Board yesterday announced the adoption of a single five-star ratings system for hofels in a move aimed at ending years of confusion over the quality of rooms and services. The system, using the internationally recognised five stars, will cover all hotels with a similar scheme for bed-and-breakfasts, guesthouses, farmhouses and taken into account the quality of accommodation and the second production and the sec inns. It takes into account the quality of accommodation, yet emphasises the facilities provided, offering a single

integrated star rating.

The Wales Tourist Board is expected to adopt a similar system, but the Scottish Tourist Board is continuing with its own scheme, which already covers four-fifths of hotels north of the border, stresses quality over facilities such as room service and whether rooms have televisions.

The English scheme was agreed with the Automobile Association and the Royal Automobile Club, which have been running rival ratings schemes offering different types of gradings based on varying criteria. Details of the new gradines still have to he worked out, but the ETB has already pencilled in 2000 for its launch.

Belfast murder charge

A 29-year-old man has been charged with the murder of a man found beaten to death in an alleyway in east Belfast. The accused from the Cregagh area of east Belfast is due. before Belfast magistrates today, the Royal Ulster.

Gary McKimm, 33, of Castlereigh Parade, was found with severe head and body injuries in an alleyway off the Castlereigh

Caver seriously injured

A seriously injured man was airlifted to hospital after plunging 90ft in a moorland cave yesterday.

The 37-year-old was exploring freby Fell Cavern in Lancashire but near Ingleton, North Yorkshire, when he fell. Emergency first aid was given to him by members of the Bolton Cave Rescue organisation before they hoisted him to the surface. A helicopter from RAF Leconfield then carried him to the Royal Presson Hospital where his condition was him to the Royal Preston Hospital where his condition was described as "quite serious".

Appetite whetter

will acquire its largest restaurant boat when The Silver Sturgeon, a multi-million pound vessel, is launched next April.

The 1,000-tonne, 200ft long luxury boat will cruise through London offering

facilities for up to 400 passengers. It is being built at George Prior Engineering at Lowestoft in Suffolk and will be launched in Docklands in east London. With three airconditioned bars, two restaurants, two dance floors, a wine cellar, and extensive promenade decks, the new vessel will be the flagship of the Woods River Cruises' fleet. "I want to introduce a new era of cruising on the Thames," said the company's managing director, Alan Woods. The company already operates three river boats - The Silver Bonito. The Silver Dolphin and The Silver Barracuda.

Mothers' dilemma

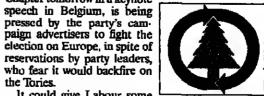
The children of women who work full time are twice as likely to fail their GCSEs as those whose mothers spend more time at home, according to new research.

The findings are featured on BBC1's edition of Panorama tonight, which claims the number of women in Britain in full-time employment has risen by 66 per cent since 1984. Professor Margaret O'Brien, who carried out the research with a team from North London University, said they found 11 per cent of children whose mothers worked part time left school with no GCSEs. That more than doubled among children whose mothers worked full time to 25 per cent. While 49 per cent of children with mothers working parttime passed five or more exams, only 33 per cent of children of full-time working mothers scored as many passes. All 600 of the families in the study had fathers in full-time work. Professor O'Brien said the findings were "disturbing" and flouted the research team's expectation that children with

£22.6m lottery jackpot

two working parents would have better opportunities.

Nine tickets shared last Saturday's £22.6m National Lottery jackpot, each getting £2.512.517. The winning numbers were 12, 48, 36, 20, 28, 16. The bonus ball was 34.



NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING Recycled paper made up 41.2% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1996

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Creator of 'Archers' dies

Louise Jury

Godfrey Baseley, who created BBC radio's longest-running series. The Archers, died vesterday. He was 92.

Vanessa Whithurn, the current editor, said he had created a programme that became a national institution. "Millions of listeners are hugely indebted to him for the pleasure it has giv-en them over the last 46 years." Mr Baseley devised the series

in 1950, when the idea was to creare a "sort of country Dick Barton [the detective series] without the violence" telling the daily events of farming folk. He had already worked as an

outside broadcaster producing a weekly farming magazine, and each episode of the new show was to be full of hints for farmers faced with modernisation after World War Two in a classic BBC combination of informing and entertaining. All the



original actors were amateurs and had day jobs because the hudget was so small. Mr Baseley said last year that he had been "amazed and delighted" at the show's success. He died after a short stay in

at the Princess of Wales Com-

munity Hospital in Bromsgrove,

Colin Brown Chief Political Correspondent

The strongest hint so far that a Labour government could give the go-ahead to Britain's entry into a single European currency within the lifetime of the next Parliament yesterday came from Robin Cook, one of the leading sceptics in the Shadow

The Shadow Foreign Secretary's remarks, raising the prospect of Britain's possible entry by 2002, were privately welcomed by those close to Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, and will put pressure on the Government to use Europe as an election issue, in spite of the open divisions in

its ranks. The chances of a single cur-rency happening by 1999 were "50-50". Mr Cook said on LWT's Dimbleby programme. "I think in the short run you can there is one milestone along the

being ourside of the single currency and after all probably half of the countries of the European Union are going to be outside any first wave, even if that wave does start in 1999 which is doubtful.

"In the long run, if we are outside a single currency, people in Tokyo, people in Dallas making inward investment decisions are more likely to look at the inner core within the currency rather than those outside and that was what Toyota was warning about this week." Pressed on what he meant by

if it goes ahead and if it succeeds, in other words if it is stahle then you cannot stay out." Asked how long would it take to make that judgement, Mr Cook went on: "I think that is a period which you don't have to prescribe in advance hut

the "long run", he added: "I said

certainty hold the position of way, which is 2002 when you enter the retail phase. I think it would take a very sober and serious calculation to stay out beyond 2002."
He coupled his remarks on

the single currency with the prospect of a Labour government using a more positive approach to Europe to slow the pace of political integration. "What is required if you want to provide any different kind of vision for the future of Europe is for Britain to be tak-

en seriously as a full player and possibly someone who could possibly articulate and lead the other member states," he said.
"France and Germany are not the only country in the European Union. If there are proposals which are emerging from France and Germany

which are unacceptable or dam-

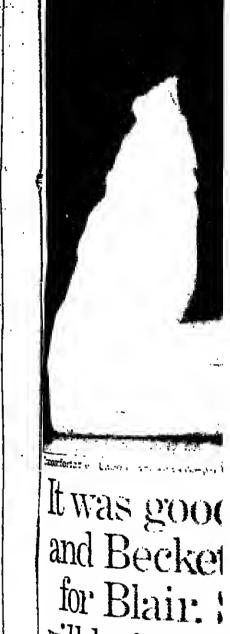
aging to the people of Britain

-we have yet to see what those

might be - there is not a nec-

It could give Labour some difficulties today with the start of the Wirral South by-election campaign, although the splits in the Tory party resurfaced as Sir George Gardiner, the leading Euro-sceptic Tory MP who was deselected from his seat in Reigate, announced he would fight for reinstatement. Sir George, who is threatening legal action, denied he would stand as an independent, saying he expected to be "the official

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'Intelligent food' about to hit the menu Sensible eating can alleviate common complaints which often need a visit to the doctor and it may soon be possible to buy specially prepared food which

'cure" high blood pressure A guide published today by the Women's Nutritional Advisory Service (WNAS) claims its programme of healthy earing could alleviate a wide range of problems, while "intelligent food" is the alternative solution from Campbell Soup in America. A range of frozen meals delivered to customers' homes and designed to fulfil all the major health guidelines on fat, fi-bre and nutrient levels are the

US company launching products that target specific health complaints. Louise Jury reports

come known as "ocu-traceuticals". They are marketed in the US as as a food "cure" for conditions such as high blood pressure where diet is a factor.

And the range is likely to be introduced in Britain, although the claims will have to be modified under the UK's strict medical licensing laws. In the meantime, the WNAS more modestry aims to tackle 120 migraines, period pains and fa-

for providing women with inadequate dietary information. A spokeswoman said nine in

10 family doctors had little nutritional knowledge because fewer than four hours of lectures were devoted to diet during training. They were woefully orant about the value of healthy eating.

"It is therefore not surprising that women are often fobbed off with inadequate treatment, or worse still, labelled as psychi-

latest products in what have beeome known as "oeuprogramme, while blaming GPs result is that for many women. result is that for many women.

necessary from qualified dietiresult is that for many women. the appalling quality of their health severely disrupts their en-joyment of life, and indeed their ability to cope with every day commitments.

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Doctors defended themselves against the claim yester-day. Dr Brian Goss, a member of the British Medical Association's GPs' committee, said GPs had to cover a huge amount during training, but di-ctary advice was always available to the GP and to the patient if

much that is solely dietary. There may be a whole host of other facts. It depends on the condition." late and cakes which she knew

Dr Marian Latchman, a family doctor in Suffolk with four children, said it was unfair to hlame GPs. "One of the things that has made me most despondent in more than 15 years as a GP has been that however you dress up advice to alter diet and move away from junk, when yet another group of peo-il's usually totally ineffectual. ple turn and round and knock

When you give out dictary advice eyes go into glaze mode."

She said she could not bear to go to the supermarket between October and January because of the piles of choco-

her patients were buying and "Whatever I do in my own little way, I cannot match what is going oo in the supermarket. 1 cannot change dietary patterns at all and it is a sad day for GPs us." Women were no worse than men, and there was some evidence that they were better, but many used food as a crutch, she said.

Lucy Daniels, a state regisjered dietician, said it was true that sometimes a nutritional answer to a medical problem was not in the forefront of GPs' minds. "But I would be the first to say that nutrition can't solve everything. People shouldn't be afraid to see their doctor." Nemraceuticals, where specific ingredients are added to

foods to produce specific physiological benefits, aim at cnabling people to eat themselves well. The supermarket chain Tesco was among those who two vears ago began to introduce products such as margarine with fish oil that reduces blood fat levels.

Although dieticians argue a balanced diet should provide all the nutrients required, many are impressed by some of the results of the neutraceuricals.

But Mrs Daniels said that sometimes they were more expensive than normally available foodstuffs and contained more



It was good enough for Prescott and Beckett. It was compulsory for Blair. So Labour in power will bring it back: school uniform

David Blunkett could not stand his cap, Margaret Beckett did oot really care for the colours. and Clare Short did not go a bundle oo her boater.

For John Prescott, the party deputy leader, life at Ellesmere Pon secondary modern meant smart uniformity, while in the rather more refined surroundings of Fettes College, Edia-burgh where his leader, Tony Blair, was educated, there was never been any question that uniforms were de rigueur. But the Lahour front-

benchers all agree that, whatever their own experiences, uniforms are just the thing for Cabinet is keen to replace designer labels in the classroom with something more akin to school badges. Compulsory uniforms bave heen in decline since the Sixties, and the classroom, they say, is in danger of becoming a fashion parade.

Mr Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, announced yesterday that the party was considering reintroducing school uniform into state schools as part of its drive for greater parental power in education.

No sooner had be outlined his vision for colour co-ordinated classrooms, than a Conservative MP accused him of "gross hypocrisy". Graham Rid-dick, MP for Colne Valley and a member of the Commons ed- a different era with designer ucation and employment com-mittee, pointed out that in 1981 Mr Blunkett, as leader of Sheffield City Council, backed a motion preventing schools insisting on uniforms for pupils.

"He did one thing while in is why I'm advocating some



John Prescott (left) in uniform at the age of seven; Right, a young Tony Blair at Fettes College, Edinburgh

the safe socialist citadel in Sheffield and says quite another in his effort to larget middleelass votes at the general election," Mr Riddick said.

Mr Blunkett last night admitted that he had indeed voted against compulsory uniforms 16 years ago. "At the time people thought it was the right decision in view of the fact that kids had been sent home for wearing the wrong coloured socks," he said. "Sixteen years on, we're talking about a code of dress in clothes which have transformed

the expense for parents." Mr Blunkett's own uniform "involved khaki". "My problem was that the school uniform was kind of code of dress which parents decide on but young people bave a part in. They should decide on the colour and match so it isn't an embarrassment to wear, but rather can be worn with a sense of oride."

Along with his blazer, Mr Blunkett wore a cap at Sheffield School for the Blind. "I never liked wearing the cap," he said. .
"I wouldn't wish to inflict a cap on youngsters." Recently, he voted in favour

year-old son, Andrew, attends. His son voted against uniform but, now that it has been intro-duced, has "learnt to live with it". From a parent's point of view, Mr Blunkett added, uniform is economical. "It's taken

of uniform at the school his 14-

designer clothes which they were all in before. They want the actual brand-name stuff, so they get the label on it ... It's really a rip-off. Obviously they are still into it for weekend and evening wear, but that doesn't put the same strain on." Margaret Beckett, Labour's

trade and industry spokeswoman, recalled her uniform at Notre Dame high school in Norwich with little relish. "It was uncomfortable and expensive," she said. "Like most kids, I didn't care for it very much. Uniforms always feel misshapen, don't they?"

But it need not be like that, Mrs Beckett felt sure. "I'm sure you can get good and modern school uniform that isn't any of those things."

Clare Short, spokeswoman on overseas development, work a navy-blue school blazer with the school's motto, "The pen is mightier than the sword", and a matching pinafore dress. The image of St Paul's Grammar School for Girls, in Birmingham, lives on. "I see my former self walking about the town," Ms Short said

Like her Shadow Cabinet colleagues, Ms Short expressed disbelief at the quirky rules which governed her school wardrobe. "At 16 you were so grown-up you couldn't fit your body into a pinafore. You could wear a skirt. In fact, you had to wear a skirt,

and then you could wear nylons." She is in favour of a reintroduction of uniforms, not least for the children's sake, saying "There is so much pressure to grow up and the sexualisation of youngsters is so great that if schools are able to be a bit of a haven from that, that's a the competitiveness out of the good thing."

The lunch at No 10 and England's final indignity

An invitation to lunch with the Prime Minister at Downing Street next week was behind the hurried announcement on Friday night by Uefa, European football's governing body, that it was backing Germany rather than England in their bid to stage the 2006 World Cup finals.

The subject of World Cup candidature was not even on the original agenda at last week's Uefa meeting in Lisbon, But it was suggested by those due to attend the lunch on Wednesday week - when England meet Italy in a crucial World Cup tie that it might save some embarrassment to know before-hand what Uefa's stance was,

Only theo did it emerge that Uefa had promised some two years ago to back Germany's bid. Hence the Friday night fax to the Football Association's headquarters at Laneaster

The machinations of last week's meeting were revealed yesterday by one of its ob-servers, David Will, Scotland's Fifa vice-president, who said: There was certainly no underhand dealing. A number of members had received an invitation to meel Mr Major and wanted to discuss the World Cup hid, so it was added to the

Now England have joined



Success story: England's staging of Euro 96 last summer has encouraged a bid for the 2006 World Cup finals

committed." However, the FA, encour-

ged by their success in staging the European championships last summer, is determined to press on with their £10m bid in the hope that Fifa, the world governing body, will consider both bids. Uefa's general secretary, Gerhard Aigner, one of two Germans on the executive committee in Lisbon, said that the association would like to see the rules changed so that only one bid from each continent was permissible. Prominent Fifa representa-

tives will be among those invitthe race but Uefa feels that have ed to next week's lunch, when

ing said that to Germany it is the home bid will be officially launched. It promises to be eveo more lively than that evening's match at Wemhley.

While the tabloids, inevitably, are turning it into an England-Germany confrontation, the dispute is really with Uefa. An election may be imminent but the major parties are united in their desire to bring the World Cup back to England for the first time since 1966 when England beat Germany in the final. "No other country," said

John Major, "can put together the combination of historic links and technical and sporting prowess which the FA brings to its application." The Labour Uefa's solidarity with the Germans as "a cosy little stitch-up". Lennart Johansson, the Uefa president, said that the FA

should have been aware that Uefa was recommending Ger-many's bid. "They say they didn't know anything, but if that's the case there must have been a terrible breakdown in communications," he said.

However, Sir Bert Millichip the former FA chairman and another observer in Lisbon. was adamant that "no decision was ever minuted".

A Ucfa delegation will be sent to London this week to "clarify" the situation. What the FA would like clarified, said David Davies, its director of public affairs, was when and where approval of the German hid was officially given. "Such a decision would have been an important matter," he said, "We believe democracy matters. Two years ago it's entirely true there was just one European bid, but now we have a hid and there may also be others.

"This is a decision that doesn't have to be made notil 2000, so why is one hid not heing properly heard?
"We will be very interested in

hearing the answer to this ques-tion from the Uefa representatives. But this is a decision for

Political footballs, Glenn Moore, Sports Section, page 7

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Friends oppose plans to blot Wordsworth landscape

An inquiry will rule on moves to turn the Lake District into a 'windpower capital'. Stephen **Goodwin** reports

A ridge of hills on the edge of the Lake District National Park could become the windpower capital of England, a public

inquiry will be told this week.

Landscape conservationists deplore the prospect, but National Wind Power, the company with the higgest stake on high ground of the Furoess peninsula, claims that 82 per cent of the public is behind its

"clean energy" proposals.
Standing proud in the face of the westerlies that rush in over the trish Sea, the Kirkby Moor ridge is ideally situated for wind turbines. National Wind Power already has 12 threehladed turbines on the moor, generating enough electricity for about 4,000 homes and preventing the release of about 12,000 tonnes of global-warm-



ing carbon dioxide each year. Another firm has five turbines on nearby Harlock Hill.

177ft high and generate enough electricity for 7,000 homes. But the expansion, like the National Wind Power wants to extend its farm by crecting 14 initial development, is opposed by Cumbria county and South turbines on Gunson Height.

The new turbines would be Lakeland councils, the National Park and by the Friends of the Lake District, All maintain that the turbines will be in "harsh conflict" with a landscape that is a natural continuation of the

fells of the National Park. A public inquiry is due to open tomorrow into an appeal by National Wind Power against South Lake District Council's refusal to grant planning per-

mission for the extension. The Department of the Environinquiry at Ulverston expected to last 12 days.

But the Friends fear a re-run of an earlier inquiry when an inspector appointed by the

ment found against the initial Kirkby Moor wind farm only to be overruled by the then Secretary of State, Michael Heseltine. With developments on

two other sites in the pipeline. Ian Brodie, secretary of the Friends, said it looked as if companies were "intent on turning the Furness peninsula into the wind farm capital of England".

The existing turbines can be seen from Coniston Waterwhich lies 10 miles away and is a popular tourist spot in the National Park. However, developments on the ridge will-be most noticeable from Black Combe, its 2,000ft neighbour and a favourite of the poet William Wordsworth, who praised the "terraqueous spectacle" unveiled from the summil. But in future the view to the east could well be of a ridge forested by an almost continuous line of futuristic windmilk

Wind farms present an ethical dilemma for environmentalists. While they are highly visible, they are the greeness form of electricity generation. And despite voluble opposition the public has consistently backed them. In a survey conducted for National Wind Power five months after the Kirkby Moor turbines began operating, only 10 per cent of local people

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Medical alert over police armour

Jason Bennetto and David Garfinkel

A police inquiry has been launched into the possible harmful side effects of body armour after several women officers reported injury and

pain to their breasts. At least five women in two forces - Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire - have complained of trauma to their breasts after wearing the bulletand knife-proof vests under their uniforms. Doctors believe the vests may have caused a condition called peri ductal mastitis, which caused inflammation to the breast tissue and can lead to abscesses and surgery. However, medical experts have stressed the problem is not linked to any form of breast can-

Police forces throughout the country have started to issue protective vests to all their officers and there is concero that the small number of complaints about breast injury may be the tip of the iceberg. Forces are also desperate to ensure nothing hampers the growing availability of body armour which follows years of lobbying for

greater protection. The Police Federation, the association which represents the vast majority of the 126,000 officers in England and Wales, has set up an inquiry into the possible side effects of the vests and is seeking help in the United States, where body armour has

been worn for a long time. In Greater Manchester. where about 700 women police officers have worn lightweight bullet proof vests since the summer, at least three have reported problems. They complained of soreness and a hardening of the breast area. A doctor has diagnosed "me-chanical mastitis" for at least one officer, according to Sergeant Mike Huby, chairman of Greater Manchester Police Federation.

Sgt Huby said: "I under-

stand that the women are being treated by the force dector and are not currently wearing the vest. The federation are concerned that a piece of equipment that is there to protect an

officer .. may be causing injury. In West Yorkshire there are about 4,700 vests. The force's medical officer Dr Chris Shinn said: "It is simply a matter that the commonly available armour is for blokes and is not designed to go around a woman's bgure. It has caused soreness of the hips and the breasts to be

squeezed. Other forces to routinely issue vests include Northumbria, while the Metropolitan Police and Merseyside are about to equip all their officers.

Professor Robert Mansel, professor of surgery at the University of Wales in Cardiff, the condition is sometimes known as "jogger's nipple", which runners can experience.

Professor Mansel said: "If body armour was tightly fitting against a woman's body it could have the same effect.

A spokeswoman for the Po-lice Federation said: "We are checking both nationally and internationally ...but it must be stressed that there is no evidence to connect breast cancer



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Risky business: An officer

Aircraft manuals often ambiguous

Ambiguous instruction manuals are not confined to videos and hi-fis - they also plague commercial aircraft, it was claimed today. As a result planes are not as well maintained or safe as they could be. say researchers.

Part of the problem is that aircraft manuals, which are all in English, have to be understood by people from many different countries.

In one case an instruction read: "Remove the bolt. If it is worn, replace it". A technician who did not have English as a first language put the worn bolt back after examining it. On another occasion, a confusingly laid out table led to the wrong kind of oil being used. A system of "controlled lan-

guages" has been introduced

setting out rules of vocabulary and grammar designed to make the manuals easier to understand internationally.

But there are doubts about how effective it is and suggestions that sometimes it can create even more ambiguity. A team at the Human Com-

munication Research Centre in Edinburgh is now developing ways to test how well the manuals are understood and see how they can be improved. Professor Keith Stenning

the centre's director, said: "There are lots of well documented cases of major safety hazards caused by the documentation rather than the System ... the documentation is as much a part of the system that needs to be tested for safety as



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news

It was just a delivery job. Now the lorry driver faces years in jail without a trial

James Dormer left home last December to drive to Greece, as he had on numerous occasions. With him, and his consignment of Dr Martens boots, was his girlfriend, Jacqui. She liked to go with him to make sure he ate properly and to keep authorities.

lum company.

The took their cab, which they had bought with help from Jacqui's elderly mother when she remortgaged her house. The trucking provided an income for all of them, and covered the mortgage payments. See you before Christmas, he told his daughter, hefore they

Dormer, 46, and Jacqui Rose. 50, are languishing in separate prisons in Greece, accused of what the Greek authorities bave classified as "grand theft". They are unlikely to receive a trial date before September. The truck is in Athens, impounded by the Greek

Back in Hackney, north London, Cheryl, Mr Dormer's 23year-old daughter, is trying to work out how to tell Jacqui's elderly mother that, in the absence of any income, she may well lose the bouse where she

has lived since she was 20. "Dad was going to pick the trailer up from Dover and dri-

ve over to Greece. I was expecting them home any day," Cheryl said. "Then just before Christmas I received a call from him to say they'd been arrested. My dad was crying, be was really emotional.

According to the British Embassy in Athens, Mr Dormer was arrested when be came to deliver his third consignment of the boots and a large number of them were discovered to be missing. The value of the goods, put at £40,000, means that bail is unlikely.

According to Cheryl, who recently sent her father £600 to enable him to make the telephone calls from his prison on island off the mainland,





both are distraught. "The last time he saw Jacqui she bad dirt on ber face and was handcuffed and being led off. He basn't been able to change his clothes. All their stuff is in the

lorry, which has been impounded," she said added

"He's just cracking up. He's worried about Jacqui. He's not ealing properly. It's difficult to

when you're their age," she

Mr Dormer and Ms Rose say they are innocent. They believe the consignment must bave been stolen from Dover, before

they picked it up. Their repre-Jakobi of Fair Trials Abroad, wonders why someone would at-tempt to deliver a load they had allegedly stolen.
He says there would be a sim-

ple way of checking wbether they bad "offloaded" some on the way: the lorry would have stopped at weigh-stations along their European route. However, collection of evidence between EU countries could take years. "The problem is not a straightforward one because of the need for international evidence as to the possibility of the goods having been missing at an earlier stage," Mr Jakobi said. "Work will presumably will

have to be done in Greece, Italy, France and England and they will need separate requests to separate ministries of justice via the Greek Ministry of Justice. Our record for this kind of thing is two and a half years."

Official requests from courts for evidence from other countries within the European Union take often unacceptable leogths of time or are ignored. Mr Jakobi points to a "chorus" of complaints from Freech lawyers and judges about the way official requests from their courts appear to be ignored or delayed. Often this leads to the accused spending "unacceptable" lengths of time in remand.

A previous client, grandmother Josephine Conn, spent two years on remand in France on soft-drugs charges, much of

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it awaiting replies from Span-ish authorities to a request from the French court for as-

A spokesman for the British Embassy in Athens, which is monitoring the couple, said the case was an unusual one. She said that the lawyer for Ms Rose, who was originally charged with complicity, was going to make an application for her to be released on bail, but it was unlikely that she would be returning to Britain.

As well as finding the mon-ey, the problem is whether she would he allowed to leave the country, and if not, how she would support herself in all the trial, she said.

Last year the Home Office handled 2,540 requests for evidence from countries within the EU, and 3,707 worldwide. A spokesman said that while some. could take a couple of weeks to process, others could take many.

Bouncers 'beat up' Boy George

Boy George yesterday said he was beaten up by bouncers at the nightclub where he works as a DJ.

The former Culture Club pop star says he will never again work for the Ministry of Sound one of Loodon's leading dance venues. He was due to begin work on an album, Dance Nation 3, for the club yesterday, but said the session, or any other. will never take place after the alleged attack at the south-east

Loodon nightspot. Trouble flared when Boy George used his VIP pass to allow him to bypass the queue waiting to go inside the club for an Elvis Presley theme night.

He said two doormen refused to let his female companion, called Amanda, accompany him

"I said 'What's this, Islam? we're special guests' and they grabbed me by the throat and dragged me out into the street. They kicked me and punched me and broke my fingernails. They actually beat me up under the poster advertising an album

bave done for them. "As far as I'm concerned my relationship with the Ministry of



with the Ministry of Sound'

Mark Rodel, managing director of the Ministry of Sound, later confirmed an incident involving Boy George bad taken place. Mr Rodel added that the doormen would all have recognised Boy George and known

he worked at the club. Boy George along with the Radio 1 DJ Pete Tong, both regulars at the club, recently proselling dance albums on behalf of the Ministry. The Annual 2 sold over 450,000 copies.

DAILY POEM

A Complaint From Inner Chambers

By John Cayley, from the Chinese of Jiang Zong (AD 519-594) Hushed and still, a hospice

on the great north road, Threading flakes of fulling snow before a silken light. Over the pond, the hirds in pairs are never alone In curtain folds, the scent of "Passion"

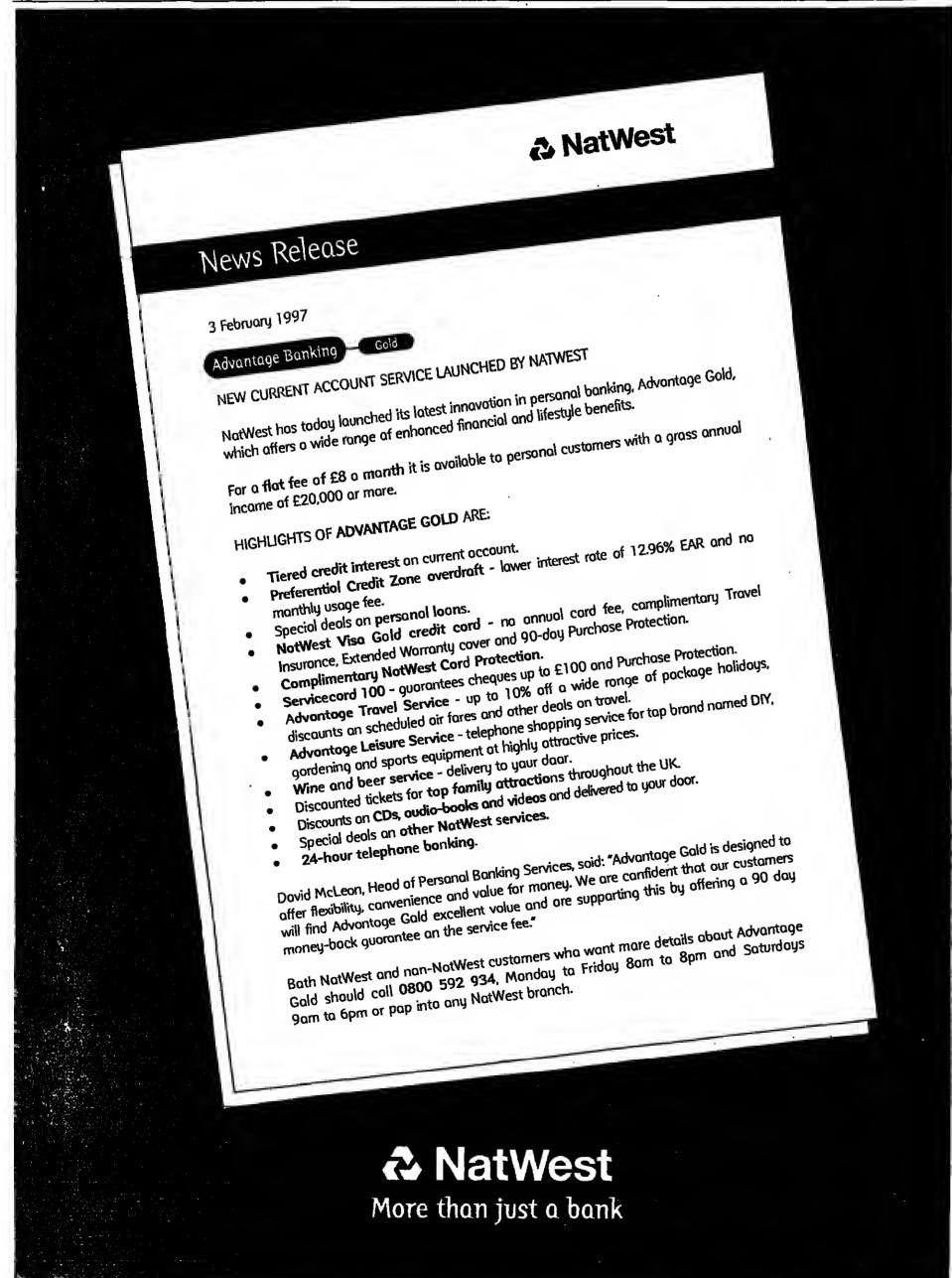
curling senselessly.

An animate wind brushes the screen to bar the bright moon, The pitiless lamp stays lit to shine

on her sleeping alone . . . "In Laoxi, you said, the rivers froze and spring was brief. Later geese came south, but still no word from you, on their long journey.

wish you too would cross the passes, come back soon To me. My beauty, like the flower of peach and plum falling petals of time."

This poem comes from John Cayley's new collection of mans lations from the Chinese and original work, Ink Bamboo. is jointly published, price £8.95, by Agenda Editions (5 Cabbourne Court, Albert Bridge Road, London SW11 4PE) and Bellew Publishing (8 Balham Hill, London SW12 9EA)



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Paul Roberts,

David Warner;

(Homeless Network)

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David Blunkett MP Paul Boateng MP Alex Carlisle QC MP Cynog Dafis MP Baroness David Bryan Davies MP Jim Dowd MP Bill Etherington MP Paul Flynn MP Maria Fyfe MP Neil Gerrard MP Llin Golding MP Baroness Gould Pauline Green MEP Harry Greenway MP Baroness Hilton Dr Kim Howells MP Doug Hoyle MP Adam Ingram MP Sir Russell Johnston MP Lynne Jones MP Nigel Jones MP Peter Kilfoyle MP Glenys Kinnock MEP Helen Liddell MP Robert K Litherland MP Sir Geoffrey Lofthouse MP Robert Maclennan MP Alice Mahon MP Estelle Morris MP Paul Murphy MP Peter Pike MP Roy Thomason MP Lord Tope David Turner MP Paul Tyler MP Jim Wallace MP Dafydd Wigley MP

Joe Benton MP

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Welsh anger ignites at 'dirty' power plant

The Government has been asked to intervene in plans to import and huro what has been described as the world's dirtiest

fuel in a Welsh power station. The Countryside Council for Wales, the Government's statutory adviser on conservation in the principality, has written to the Department of Trade and Industry urging a public invert Pembroke Power Station to huro Orimulsion. The move

comes after two years of investigations into the plans to hum up to five million tonnes a year of the South American hituminous fuel, described by some environmentalists as "the fuel

Under the original plans put forward by National Power, the Orimulsion would be imported through Milford Haven, the area hit by the disaster caused when the Sea Empress ran aground and spilled its cargo of oil. That incident highlighted the sensitivity of an area which

boasts four special conservation ic the effects of oestrogen, and protection areas and where which in experiments have wildlife gems alone include 10 per cent of the world's population of gannets and half the European breeding population of the Manx Shearwater.

Environmentalists maintain that the emulsion fuel from Venezuela is even more difficult to clear up than crude oil when it is spilt and that is poses an unacceptable risk. It is also claimed that so-called "gen-der-bender" chemicals used to help emulsify the bitumen mimwhich in experiments have made male fish produce female protein. Friends of the Earth says that the planned Orimulsion imports would hring in 10,000 tonnes a year of

these chemicals. In a statement yesterday, the Countryside Commission said it had spent two years in discussions with the developer and the regulatory authorities, and had sought improvements in pollution control, and assurances and guarantees against the environmental consequences of

"During this period, the Sea Empress disaster occurred, owing considerable doubt on the assurances that had been given over marine safety and reinforcing scientists' opin-ion over the risk to the marine environment in the area," said

the statement. The CCW said it had been asked to comment on draft conditions attached to the proposal to burn the fuel and Dr Malcolm Smith, CCW's Director of Policy and Science, said: concern - the effects of a spill of emulsified oil products cannot be resolved by such

"The issue is whether the risks and consequences of an environmental catastrophe can be understood and controlled to the point where they are acceptable in view of the outstanding importance and fragility of the marine environment in this area, and its extremely high recreation and

tourism interests. "It seems un-likely that these issues can be fully explored and resolved by further discussions with the developer, and the CCW considers that the only way in which these issues can be fully aired and properly resolved is through a public inquiry."

Environmental groups have consistently opposed the plans to burn Orimusion. Margaret Minhinnick, director of Sustainable Wales, said: "The plans involve transporting this fuel from Venezuela, with the risks

of spillages, and then burning it in a power station which will result in a significant facease in particle release into the en-vironment and worselfing the acid rain problem in Whites.

The National Rivers Au thority warned in a report the years ago that it would be same more difficult to control in Orimulsion spill than one is

volving oil. Because the fuel a airest mixed with water, it would the perse rapidly rather than lying on the top like oil...

No end

in sight

Young artists open door on a living hell

Clare Garner

The writing is on the wall. Life at home is hell. It's evil, Enter any room at the Behind Closed Doors art exhibition in south London, and enter the mind of a young child and a reflection of the world in which they live.

It quickly becomes painfully apparent that these child artists need help. They urgently need a safe haven and time out from life as it is lived in one of the country's most deprived inner-

"Help me", screams the black lettering in a painting by John, 14. A poem by Joe, aged nine, pleads: "Violence will not solve anything. Why don't you stop whipping? ... Stop, stop, stop! It's ENOUGH."

Fortunately, help is at hand for these unhappy, disturbed children. It comes in the shape of Camila Batmanghelidjh, a half-Iranian, half-Belgian 33year-old clinical psychotherapist whose first project. The Place ki Be, was described by the p chotherapist and author Susic Orbach as a "model project".

Ms Batmanghelidjh's charity, Kids Company, comprises a team of 90 volunteer and paid counsellors, therapists, artists, musicians and sports enthusiasts who have spent the past year going into schools to provide

emotional support for children. Now she is putting down roots so that, as well as going out to the children, the children can come to her. Later this month. she opens her own Young People's Centre. Situated in a notoriously poor area of south



Torture chamber: John, 14, with his work at the Behind Closed Doors exhibition in south London

London, the centre, near Elephant and Castle, will be in the warehouse now housing the exhibition. It will provide an open house to young people in need of a safe environment

outside school hours. "These are children invisible to most services - they need help hut have not received it." said Ms Batmanghelidjh, whose clients are sometimes as young as five and include a notorious. Peckham-hased gang which

calls itself the Knife Boys. have mental problems them- admission, would normally be Company £500 a year to help a very little attention from adults and who cope with their difficulties on their own. Many of them have experienced violence, bereavement, abuse or neglect from a young age. By offering warmth and consistency we give them new ways of cop-

ing emotionally." The centre is easily accessible. Children don't have to rely on parents - the hulk of whom

"These are children who have selves to attend appointments roaming the streets, fighting or receive help. They can refer themselves or be referred by teachers. They will be able to pursue creative interest, including art, dance, drama, music, cookery and jewellery making, as well as receive coun-

"Many of the youngsters lack a positive, nurturing environment," said Ms Batmanghelidjh. "Many, by their own

or even committing petty crimes. The centre will be a place where children's talents can be developed and encouraged, and their worries can be heard and understood, These simple things can rekindle a

child's hope. Kids Company is extremely cost effective and, in the longrun, a "socially intelligent option," she added. "It costs Kids

child, as opposed to the £2,500 that it costs clinics and agencies. To keep a young offender in an institution costs around £30,000 a year - yet the need for this can in some cases be avoided if a

child can be reached early." Based on research undertaken at The Royal Free Hospital, in Hampstead, north-west London, Ms Batmanghelidjh claims that after about nine

months a child shows marked

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

improvements in self-esteem, at-

titude and behaviour. The project now urgently needs to raise £361,000 to equip and run the centre, which it hopes will service 1,000 children a year in the evenings, at weekends and during the holidays. The exhibition is at 260-261 Grosvenor Court, off Walworth Road, and runs until 30 May. To make a donation, write to: Kids Company, 40 Barforth Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3PS.

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Joanna Snicker

Only one of the asylum seekers being held Rochester prison was still rejecting fluids yesterday, as a fellow hunger striker nar-rowly escaped death after being rushed to hospital.

Meanwhile, the Prisons minister, Ann Widdecombe, cautiously welcomed an offer of help by the Bishop of Rochester but still refused to negotiate with the detainces. "I do not have a deal to offer," she told Radio 4's Sunday Programme. But I would welcome anything that would assist them

coming off the protest:" Fourteen inmates from Nigeria, Algeria, Romania and Zaire have been on hunger strike in the Kent prison for four weeks, claiming they are being treated like convicted criminals while their asylum applications are processed. They have pledged to continue for another two

The situation became more ous last week when six detainees started refusing water. A Nigerian pastor, Ejike Emenike, 30, was rushed into hospital to have rehydration treatment. He has now rejoined the six men in the hospital wing of the prison. A further eight are refusing food in the prison wings, according to Home Office reports. "None of them are giving cause for immediate concern," said a spokesman yesterday.

On Saturday, more than 100 protesters gathered outside the prison in support of the detainees. They marched around to the side of the prison, cheering when the detainees shout-ed for their freedom over the

Brian Dubs, spokesman for the Rochester Hunger Strikers' Support Group and Hackney representative for Unison, the public sector union, said: "We wanted to draw as much attention to these people who are just being treated as though they are criminals. The Government seems to be taking an even harder line. They are prepared to allow them to die."

Supporters claim that many inmates have languished in jail for two years while applications are being processed, and one man is still in Rochester seven months after he signed papers

for voluntary deportation. Margaret Illin, whose hus-hand Mircea was detained in Rochester prison for four months last year before being released, said the detainees are convicted criminals.

"Sometimes [after] they receive a visitor they are forced to undergo a strip search," she said. "When all the time they have not done anything wrong. These people have escaped persecution in their own country and come here where they should be safe, but then they are treated worse than criminals."

Maureen West, whose boyfriend Ben Bakesh Hamel is in the hospital wing, is anxious for information about his health. "It is starting to tell on me now," she said. "I phoned this morning and I know that he is not in hospital but I can't get any more information, 1 don't know much about the political side of it. Bul I don't think it's fair. I can't see the point in letting people die."

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Detectives to question widow of 'beehive killing' suspect

Murder inquiry detectives are to fly to Australia to talk to the widow of a man who drowned before he could be questioned about the "beehive killing" of a woman teacher.

It is understood that a detective inspector and two sergeants from the Devon and Cornwall force are to question Margaret Harris, whitse 62year-old hushand. Clifford, apparently committed suicide in the Swan river in Perth, Westem Australia, on Wednesday.

Police believe Mr Harris, a retired teacher and bee enthusiast from Ehherly in north Devon, may have been having an affair with Janice Crompton. 58, an art teacher, who lived alone in a remote former coaching house at Cheltham, near Barnstaple, north Devon.



Australian police recover the

Mrs Crompton, who kept animals, and had beehives, and whose husband lived in Cyprus. Her body was found on 25 Neighbours said he had been January – three days after she and required help "so certain-a regular visitor to the home of was reported missing. Her body, by we will be looking at medical

wrapped in a duvct and polythene bags, was discovered in the back of Mr Harris's red Toyota pick-up truck which had been parked at his son-in-law's farm at Knowstone, near South Molton, north Devon.

A hive of bees was placed on top of the body. Detectives are also to examine medical records to establish

whether or not Mr Harris suffered a rheumatic problem which may have prevented him from lifting the body into the truck alone. A police spokesman said ves-

terday that detectives had information that Mr Harris was fit and healthy, and that he was responsible for clearing land next to Mrs Crompton's home. But other people had said that he was unable to lift things

records, although they may not tell us the whole story", the spokesman added. Mr Harris's truck was parked

at the farm early on Wednesday 22 January - the day he and his wife were seen waiting for a train at Tiverton station, east Devon, en route to a planned, extended holiday in Australia, where their son Philip lives in

A week later Mr Harris - who was being monitored by Australian police following a request via Interpol from the Devon and Cornwall force apparently walked a mile from his hotel to drown himself.

John Evans, the Chief Constable, said he had been unable to persuade the Crown Prosecution Service to change its decision not to give permission for the Australian police to arrest Mr Harris.

But the CPS claimed that the West Country force did not produce enough evidence for extradition.

Mrs Harris, 60, was interviewed by Australian police and then released following her husband's death from asphyxia. Australian police said that she had no knowledge of the killing and the search for her and her husband until a news

report the day hefore he died. Devon and Cornwall police said that from the outset the officer leading the inquiry, Detective Superintendent John Smith, had wanted to talk to both Mr and Mrs Harris, "Bot it was his van, and he was the one we wanted the explanation from," the spokesman said.

The West Country force has said that it is not looking for anyone else in connection with Mrs Crompton's murder.

Childcare gap costing families dear

Glenda Cooper

Only one childcare place exists for every nine children under the age of eight, according to new research published by a national childcare charity.

Daycare Trust warns that the childcare gap is set to widen as

At present there are nearly six million children under the age of eight in Britain, but less than 700,000 registered childcare places. Those who can

"work rich families" -- well-paid qualified parents - while "work poor" families cannot afford the large amounts of money

The cost of childcare has increased dramatically between 1991 and 1994, rising hy 42 per more women with children cent, and the childcare hill for work and government policies an average family with two such as Welfare to Work young children is almost £6,000 increase demand for childcare. a year when the average amount spent on food is only The average cost to a parent

per child per week can be be-

take advantage tend to be the minder full time or £70 to £180 in a private nursery. Even employing a childminder just for out of school hours comes to between £25 and £50 a week. As a result, the charity says

that almost half of working women with children rely on "informal" childcare arrangements with relatives, partners or friends. Around 800,000 children under 12 are "latchkey" children and although out of school childcare has been kickstarted by the Government's Out of School initiative there is still only one place for every 50 schoolchildren.

The amount of childcare also differs widely around the country, resulting in a "fragmented patchwork of services depending on local income levels, local authority policies and the socio-economic history of an area." says the report. Only 10 per cent of rural parishes have a nursery and only 4 per cent have out of school facilities.

Children are missing out on quality childcare because they live in an area where it does not exist or their families can't afford to pay for it. Parents are missing out on the chance to work or study because they

cannot find childcare they can afford." said Colette Kelleher, director of the Daycare Trust. She added: "The childcare gap is costing Britain dearly.

With more women with dependent children working the demand for quality affordable child care has never been greater. Employers need to he able to recruit and retain the best staff yet many parents have to worry day in, day out about their children's care. The Childcare Gap is available price £2 from Daycare Trust, 4 Wild Court, London WC2B '4AU. Tel 0171 405 5617

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MP sets off on wrong foot in race to get ahead



Kate Hoey racing after Ben Chapman, the party's candidate in Wirral South, as they toured the constituency yesterday. However, in her rush to give her party a head start in electioneering the Vauxhall MP forgot to wear matching shoes and ended up with one brown suede shoe and one black. The by-election, which was caused by the death last year of the Tory MP Barry Porter, is expected to be on 27 February, although no firm date has yet been set.

Photographs: Howard Barlow



Clarke's jobs scheme slashed to the bone

Political Editor

A £50m government initiative to reduce long-term unem-ployment by 130,000 this year has been such a "fiasco" that ministers no longer speak of its existence.

The scheme, under which employers are given a national insurance "holiday" for each long-term unemployed person taken on, had belped only 2.312 people back into work by 6 January - nine months after its launch. It has been so disastrous that the budget has been slashed back to a nominal estimate of just £1.5m, and a recent Commons statement listing neasures "introduced since 1992 to help the long-term unemployed back to work" did not

even mention it. Under the scheme, only197 new jobs have been created for the whole of Scotland; 115 in Wales; and 83 for the Greater

neth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, first announced the proposal in his November 1994 Budget, he presented it as a brave new job-creation measure - "a package which will show the Opposition how to do it".

He rold the Commons: "The first step is to encourage employers to look more favourably on people who have been out of work for some time. I can annamee, therefore, a wholly new incentive to encourage employers to take on more people who have been unemployed for two years or more. In future, employers will get a full national insurance rebate for up to a year after taking nn such a person."

The Chancellor's statement was followed up in the Joh-seeker's Act 1995, allowing the NI deductions and last year's emplayment contributions reimsement regulations - paving the way for the scheme, which started on 6 April last year.

ployment spokesman, told The Independent yesterday: 'This is yet another of Mr Clarke's broken promises. First, we had the broken promise on taxes, and now we have a broken promise on the long-term unemployed. This scheme has been a fiasco and a disgrace.

The Chancellor's arrogant certainty ... is now seen to have failed one of the most vulnerable sections of our community. This was supposed to be one of the main planks of the government effort to get the long-term unemployed off wel-fare and into work. Clearly, it has failed, and it demonstrates a lack of commitment.

Social Security minister Oliver Heald, told Mr Byers in a recent Commans reply that estimates for the scheme had been cut from a first-year cost of £28m tn £1.5m, and 296 of the 2.718 applications received up to January had been unsuccessful.

Tories targeted over council tax 'racket'

Colin Brown Chief Political Correspondent

Tory MPs in marginal seats will be targeted by Labour for voting tonight in the Commons for a local suthority grants system which allegedly leaves their council tax payers worse off than those in wealthy Westminster. The MPs high oo Labour's

hit list include Jerry Hayes, the MP for Harlow, and David Amess, the MP for Basildoo. whose local councils, Labour claims, do badly out of the grants system, compared to the Tory flagship borough of West-

could rise in April by an aver- by course age of 8 per cent. Labour 50 Tory MPs have council tax said: "The Government assess blames the Government for payers contributing more to the increases, but ministers are their council budgets than Westready to blame Labour souncils for excessive speoding.

John Guamer, Secretary of State for the Environment will today of for Commons today for the grants which approgger the cooncil tax will ands, after the councils set dir budgets. "In Tory Westminster - Bel-

gravia and Mayfair - people contribute 10 per cent towards the council tax, but people in Harlow and Basildon contribute our times that amount. It is a acket for Westminster, which painful and expensive to othpeople across the country,' aid Frank Dobson, Labour's nvironment spokesman. "Our candidates will be minding voters how their MP sted and challenging them to

y why they did so."
The Government has insistoblems. The figures produced



It is the opening shot in a bat. Hit list candidates.

sent constituency of Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, takes 25 per cent of its budget from the council tax. Labour claims that its council tax payers would get an £862 rebate if they were on an equal footing with Westminster.

Mr Hayes dismissed Labour's challenge. "It's rub-bish. It's arithmetically illiterate. Harlow is one of the most ioefficient, high-spending, Labour-controlled couocils in the country. It costs more to have the rubbish collected here than almost any other council."

Simon Carter, former chair-I that Westminster has special man of Tory group on Harlow eds, including inner-city couocil, which oow has no Tories and comprises 40 Labour



minster, including Mr Hayes (Harlow, 45 per cent of the council's hudget): Mr Amess (Basildon, 42); David Evans (St Albans, 38 per cent), Tim Wood (Stevenage, 37 per cent). Peterborough, in the pre-

- and more than and two Liberal Democrats, grant to each of the 250 district councils. They are assessed oo the same formula which is designed to provide 85 per cent of their expenditure. Westminster come in below it, because it is more efficient. Harlow spends more."

Labour is proposing an over-

haul of the grants system, although Mr Dohson has warned that he will not bail out high spenders if his party gains power. The Audit Commission found the present system provided a "rough approximation" between need and historic funding patterns, but it added: There is increasing discontent among local authorities. Comparing the system with a checklist of objective criteria reveals that it is deficient in severai ways ...

More than 90 councils have made representations to the Government over the way their

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MONTHLY SAVER	£5000+	2.90%	2.32%	PREMIER TWELVE	£100,000+	5.75%	4.60%
	£2500+	2,90%	2.32%	Variable (Issue 1) Rate Options paying	£50,000+	5.75%	4.60%
	£1000+	2.85%	2.28%	Interest annually.	£25,000+	5.70%	4.56%
	£500+	2.80%	2.24%	•	E10,000+	5.70%	4,56%
••	£1+	2.70%	2.16%		E5,000+	5.65%	4.52%
The special state our passers						J.,,	
Interest paid annually.	E50,000+	4.45%	3.68%	PREMIER TWELVE	£100,000+	5.60%	4.48%
	£25,000+	4.15%		Variable (Issue 1) Rate Options paying	E50,000+	5.60%	4.48%
	£10,000+	3.70%	3.32%	interest monthly.	£25,000+	5.56%	4.45%
••	£5,000+		2.96%		£10,000+	5.56%	4.45%
	£2,500+	3.15%	2.52%		£5.000+	5.51%	4.41%
	£500+	2.75%	2.20%	DAMES N. 44.	-		
	~,007	2.55%	2.04%	BONUS TESSA	£3000+	4.55%	
90 DAY NOTICE ACCOUNT	£100,000+	4 540		(No longer available).	£500+	3.05%	
Interest paid monthly.	£50,000+	4.51%	3.60%		£1+	0.50%	
	£25,000+	4.36% 4.07%	3.49%	225-15-15-1	_		
	£10,000+		3.26%	PREMIER TESSA	£9,000+	6.00%	
	£5,000+	3.64% 3.11%	2.91%	(FOLLOW UP) (Issues 1 & 2)	£5,000+	5.70%	
	£2,500+		2.48%	•	£3,000+	5.70%	
	£500+	2.72% 2.52%	2.17% 2.02%		£500+	3.90%	
	-500	~.54.10	2.02 A		£1+	0.35%	
1211 DAY NOTICE ACCOUNT	£5000+	5.85%	4.68%	TESSA PLUS	£3000+	5.70%	
Interest paid annually.	£1000+	4.20%	3.36%		£500+	4.20%	
120 DAY NOTICE ACCOUNT	£5000+	E most		•	£1+	1.00%	
Interest paid monthly.	£1000+	5.70% 4.12%	4.56%				
		4.12%	3.30%	PREMIER RESERVE BONO	E1,000+	5.60%	4,48%
ONE YEAR OPTION SONO DEPOSIT	£100,000+	5.75%	4.60%	SECURE INVESTMENT ACCOUNT	£2,000+	£ 200	4.000
Variable (issue 1) Rate Options paying	E50,000+	5.75%	4.60%	(Issue 4).	12,000	6.20%	4.96%
Interest annually.	£25,000+	5.70%	4.56%	hoose Ali			
	E10,000+	5.70%	4.56%	CHARITY ACCOUNT .	E1+	2.80%	2.24%
	£5,000+	5.65%	4.52%	- Mari I Mercon	£44	2.00 %	2.24%
ME VELD ADTION DOWN ASSESSED				FULLY PAID SHARE	E50,000+	2.28%	1.82%
ONE YEAR OPTION BOND DEPOSIT fariable (Issue 1) Rate Options paying	£100,000+	5.60%	4.48%	(Rates also apply to Cheshurt Investment	£25,000+	2.13%	1.70%
interest monthly.	E50,000+	5.60%	4.48%	Share, Cheshunt Clubs, Cheshunt Ex-Thrift	E10,000+	1.83%	1.47%
anciest invituity.	£25,000+	5.56%	4.45%	and Cheshunt Subs. Share, all no longer	£5,000+	1.44%	1.15%
	£10.000+	5.56%	4.45%	available).	£2,000+	1.24%	0.99%
	£5,000+	S.51%	4.41%		£500+	0.50%	0.40%
ESSA PLUS DEPOSIT	£3000+	c 700			E1+ ·	0.20%	0.16%
	E500+	5.70%		****			
	E1+	4.20% 1.00%		SELECT	£50,000+	2.30%	1.84%
		2.00%		(No longer available).	£25,000+	2.15%	1.72%
TESSA TWO DEPOSIT	£9,000+	6.00%			E10,000+	1.85%	1.48%
(Issues 1 & 2)	£5,000+	5.70%			E5,000+	1.45%	1.16%
	£3,000+	5.70%			£2,000+	1.25%	1.00%
	E500+	3.90%			£500+ E1+	0.50%	0.40%
BEHLER CALCER						0.20%	0.16%
PREMIER SAVER	£100,000+	4.10%	3.28%	(Rates also apply to Bonus Bond Select and I	Salanced Bond S	elect). In additio	n, also
In Instant access account for investors	E50,000+	4.10%	3.28%	appues to the rollowing accounts which are n	o longer availab	vie. High 3a Dill	F-
who limit their access over a 12 month	£25,000+	3.95%	3.16%	Uverseas 3 Month Labital Account Overseas	Prime Access no	Charles (4) Charle	Fa
eriod (No Withdrawals).	£10.000+	3.60%	2.88%	yu, Cheshunt Instant Access, Cheshunt Foreis	m instant Chec	bunt Instant Gen-	
	£5,000+	3.15%	2.52%	COSSIUM Charity Instant. Fx Aid to Thrift Gu	Pranteed Imports	mont Account les	
	£2,000+	2.95%	2.36%	4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 21, 22, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18	& 10. No t Can	ital (t) Trials Do	
	£1,000+ E500+	2.80% 2.70%	2.24% 2.16%	Equity Bond 3 Year Issue 3, Bonus Interest Re	Equity Sond 3 Your land Issue 1. Can	ear issue 1, Guar Notes Road	anleed Oramies
(a c seculation also				Save Bond Issues 1, 2, 3, Escalator Bond Issu	e 3 (3 years). Fi	xed for Six Road	ictues 1 A

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Chunnel urged o check rabies

ef Political Correspondent

otunnel has been asked by Government to switch back he Channel Tunnel's main trified defences against raanimals reaching Britain ig the rail link. ingela Browning, an Agri-

ire minister, wrote to the pany, which operates the el; to restore the electrified at the entrance and exit to unnel. hey were switched off be-

of short-circuits caused by water from road spray dripped off lorries as they carried through on trains. he Agriculture minister up the issue after protests avid Shaw, the MP for r, who is campaigning st any liberalisation by overnment of the quar-: controls against. warned : "If this goes on

ler closing the Channel otunnel, which also uses closed-circuit television, s and tracker teams to nimals out of the tunnel,

uch longer, people must

A spokesman for the Ministry of Agriculture said: "Ministry officials are in discussions with Eurotunnel about resolving the problem.

Even with the grids switched off, there are sufficient measures in place to make sure that no animal with rabies can trav-

"The grid is still off at the moment but there is a pretty hostile environment for any animal. For any animal to get through would be pretty difficult."

But the issue has highlighted the opposition by Tory MPs with South Coast constituencies to the efforts by Douglas Hogg, the Minister for Agriculture, to introduce more humane anti-ra-They have been told that the

general election 8 proposal to cut the quarantine period from six months to one month. Ministers backtracked on the plans for "pet passports" after being warned the blood tests for

Government has shelved for the

rabies did oot work. The animals which failed tests would have been ordered into kennels near the ports. MPs d the Government there also said it was impractical, befic in the summer.

Whips fit Bill at cracking rate

(1-6 Withdraws

(Rates also apply to Premier Save Bond Issue 4 - no longer available).

PREMIER PLUS CAPITAL ISSUE 1
Three months notice required for

Extra Issues 1 & 2).

withdrawal (Rates also apply to Guaranteed Investment Account Issue 5

PREMIER PLUS MONTHLY INCOME

hdrawal, and interest paid monthly

Three months notice required for

their success in getting an unprecedented number of back-Commons ahead of time, bewrites Colin Brown.

Government whips are hailing

Eight bills are well on their way to becoming law, and a fistful of others are in the committee stage. They include the Telecommunications Fraud Bill, by Ian Bruce, Tory MP for Dorset South, making supply and possession of mobile-phone cloning equipment a crime; and the UN Personnel Bill, by John Marshall, Tory MP for Hendon South, which enables the UK to ratify a UN convention to protect non-combatants attached to peace missions.

The whips say one reason for the swift advance of the backbeach bills is Labour's reluctance to oppose the measures in the run-up to the election, but that is disputed by Labour.

Many Bills are from the Home Office, including the Confiscation of Alcohol Bill, by Rohert Spink, Tory MP for chnical problems in cause the ports did not have the the electrified grids capacity to deal with peak traf(Rates also apply to Bonus Bond Select and Balanced Bond Select). In addition, also applies to the following accounts which are no longer available: High 30, Hillfe, Overseas 3 Month Capital Account, Overseas Prime Access account (t), Cheshunt Foreign 90, Cheshunt Instant Access, Cheshunt Foreign Instant, Cheshunt Instant Gross, Cheshunt Charity Instant, Ex Aid to Thrift, Guaranleed Investment Account Issues 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19, No 1 Capital (t), Triple Bonus (t), Sristol Plus, Moneyink, Snoopy, Guaranleed Equity Bond 3 Year Issue 1, Guaranleed Equity Bond 3 Year Issue 3, Bonus Interest Bond Issue 1, Capital Maker Bond, Premier Save Bond Issues 1, 2, 3, Escalator Bond Issue 3 (3 years), Fixed for Six Bond Issues 1 & 2, Bonus Return Bond Issues 1 & 2, Bonus Interest Bond Issues 2 & 3, Bonus Bond Issue 2. Secure Investment Account Issue 3, Premier Option Bond Issues A. & C. (Capital)

2. Secure Investment Account Issue 3. Prem Fixed and Variable.	ier Option Bond	issues A, 8 &	Gus Bond Issue C (Capital)
SPECIAL MONTHLY INCOME (No longer available) Rates also apply to High 30 Monthly Income, Cheshunt Instant income, Better Option Bond income issue 1, Overseas Monthly Income (f), No 1 income (f), Triple Bonus Monthly Income (f), Premier Option Bond Issues A, B & C (Monthly Income) Fixed and Variable, Escalator Bond Issue 3 (Monthly Income), all no longer available,	£50,000+ £25,000+ £10,000+ £5,000+ £2,000+ £500+ £1+	2.28% 2.13% 1.83% 1.44% 1.24% 0.50% 0.20%	1.82% 1.70% 1.47% 1.15% 0.99% 0.40% 0.16%
CHESHUMT SPECIAL 90 (CAPITAL) (No longer available) Rates also apply to Cheshunt Special 90 (Gross) and Cheshunt Charity 90, all no longer available.	£50,000+ £20,000+ £5,000+ £500+ £1+	3.65% 3.35% 2.35% 1.95% 0.20%	2.92% 2,68% 1.88% 1.56% 0.16%
CHESHUNT SPECIAL 90 INCOME (No longer available).	£50,000+ £20,000+ £5,000+ £500+ £1+	3.59% 3.30% 2.33% 1.93% 0.20%	2.87% 2.64% 1.86% 1.55% 0.16%
BALMORAL HIGH INTEREST ACCOUNT (No longer available) (Also Balmoral Fixed Rate Bond Issue I and II and Balmoral Limited Edition Bond).	£100,000+ £50,000+ £25,000+ £10,000+ £2,000+	4.05% 3.90% 3.85% 3.55% 2.70%	3.24% 3.12% 3.08% 2.84% 2.16%
BALMORAL MONTHLY INCOME ACCOUNT (No longer available) (Also Balmoral Limited Edition Bond (Monthly Income)).	£100,000+ £50,000+ £25,000+ £10,000+	3.98% 3.83% 3.78% 3.49%	3.18% 3.07% 3.03% 2.79%

BRISTOL SWEST

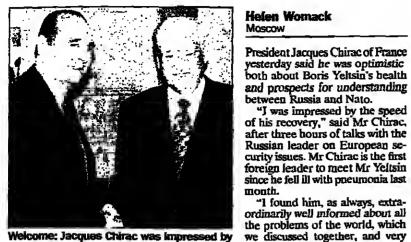
BRISTOL & WEST BUILDING SOCIETY

Chirac upbeat about Yeltsin and Russia

But Mr Chirac said be thought

showed mutual respect and flexi-bility, then an understanding could

- and this is my personal impres-



yesterday said he was optimistic

both about Boris Yeltsin's health

and prospects for understanding

Russian leader on European se-

since he fell ill with pneumonia last

tough in the defence of Russia's in-

between Russia and Nato.

Public more concerned about president's fitness than Nato expansion

terests, which is entirely legitimate."

Journalists could only take his word for it, as they had no access to Mr Yeltsin himself. French tele-President Jacques Chirac of France vision was allowed to film the Russian leader, dressed in a dark coat and fur bat, greeting Mr Chirac on the steps of his country residence at Novo-Ogaryovo. And Russian television showed a short clip of Mr Yeltsin, looking frail and with a fixed smile on his face, chat-ting to his guest inside. But there was no joint press conference af-terwards, only Mr Chirac's brief-

ing to reporters at Vnukovo airport mit," said Mr Chirac. "Yeltsin is extremely satisfied as he prepared to leave Moscow. The talks were dominated by the with the results of the talks," said

issue of Nato's planned eastward his press spokesman, Sergei point of interest was not Nato but expansion, which Russia strongly Yastrzhembsky. whether Mr Yeksin is fit to rule his

Yastrzhembsky.
Privately, Russian officials acknowledge that Nato's expansion is more or less inevitable and that if Moscow and the West Moscow is looking to European countries to help it secure a deal which would at least keep the albe reached before a summit in Madrid in July when Nato is ex-pected to invite the first former Warsaw Pact countries to juin up. liance's military structures away from its borders. France is seen as a friend because it understands "If these conditions are met. I think Moscow's desire for a legallyhinding document on relations with Nato, rather than a general political declaration as advocated sion - that an agreement can be reached before the Madrid sum-Washington

· But for ordinary Russians observing the meeting, the main

vast country. The television footage would have done little to change the minds of political op-ponents who say that the Kremin leader's double bout of pneumonia, coming on top of the heart problems that kept him out of action for much of last year, shows he should retire.

Kremlin aides insist Mr Yeltsin is making a good recovery. But he celebrated his 66th birthday on Saturday in the narrow circle of his family. The only two other guests were the Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, and the head of the

presidential administration, Anatoly Chubais, who have taken on much of the day-to-day burden of running the country while Mr. Yeltsin has been ill.

President Yeltsin congratulated Chechnya's new leader on his election, calling the vote "an im-portant step" in resolving Moscow's conflict with the breakaway republic, a spokesman said yesterday, AP reports.

Mr Yeltsin sent the head of his Mr Yetsin sent the head of his Security Council, Ivan Rybkin, to Chechnya to deliver the message at the weekend. Mr Rybkin met the Chechen president-elect, Asian Maskhadov, who says he is determined to lead Chechnya to independence but Russia says it will never let Chechnya secede.

Burial of an African dream

Addis Ababa — "Stay with me, stay with me," beseeched Princess Mederash-Worq Abebeas she threw herself on the coffin of her late husband, Crown Prince Amha Selassie. In the gloom, the Holy Trinity Cathedral was filled with chanting and incense as the remains of Emperor Haile Selassie's eldest son were lowered into the crypt to rest alongside the bodies of three of his brothers and sisters.

The service marked an emotional end to a troubled life which had latterly been lived in quiet obscurity near Washington in the United States. Crown Prince Amha Selassie, pretender to the imperial throne of Ethiopia, died in exile last month aged 80. He had not set foot in his native land since a stroke forced him to seek medical treatment in England 23 years ago.

The year after his departure, his emperor father was overthrown by the brutal Marxist Dergue regime which ruled until 1991. Since then, Ethiopia has been a democratic republic and obeisance to the old monarchy has been discouraged,

"This is a sad day," said one mourner. Thank God Amha Selassie didn't live under the Dergue, a hand of robber thieves. The monarchy is part of our history. Please

God it will one day return."

No foreign dignitaries were present at the funeral, which took place in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, yesterday. Nor had there been any announcement in the media about the ceremony. So it was a measure of the esteem in which the country's monarchy is held that so many turned up to pay their last respects to the man who, though uncrowned, was widely regarded as Emperor of Ethiopia. Between 10,000 and 15,000 mourners a more glorious past.

David Orr witnesses the funeral of Crown Prince Amha Selassie

thronged the cathedral Among them were members of the royal family, many of whom had returned from exile in the US and Britain for the private funeral. In a front pew was the new claimant to the throne, Prince Zera Yacob, who lives in a Rastafarian community in Manchester. Gazing at the vaulted ceiling above the altar, Prince Yacob might have wondered at the downfall of a dynasty which traces its roots back to the Old Testament. The panels depict scenes from the life of his grandfather, the Conquering Lion of Ju-dah, Elect of God, Haile Selassie,

Emperor of Ethiopia.

Emperor Haile Selassie was put in prison by the Dergue regime and there he died in 1975. Partially paralysed, the Crown Prince and heir to the throne settled in 1975. tled in London, By the time the under-ground Crown Council proclaimed him Emperor in 1989, the monarchy had been abolished and Amha Selassie had no dominion. He later moved to the United States which, with its large Ethiopian community, he found more conducive than Britain. "I hoped he would come back alive", said one man. "I would like to see Ethiopia continue as a constitutional monarchy like Britain. But I don't suppose I'll see the day when the monarchy



It was, said one of the few young peo-New Delhi railway station. About 11 per cent of India's population follow Islam

Photograph: Saurtabh Das/Ap



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Major and Juppé to share their problems over lunch manese PM

Of the many meetings, in friendship and enmity, between French and British leaders one of the strangest.

Two much-abused Prime
Ministers, John Major and
Alain Juppe will meet for lunch
in Downing Street today, Although both hope the worst is behind them, both men remain weak, in public opinion and within the ranks of their own nominal supporters. And yet both hope to draw strength from being seen with the other.

For Mr Major it is a chance to show that Labour is wrong to say relations between Britain and its European Union partners are at an unworkably low ebb.

For Alain Juppé - a success-ful foreign minister who became the least popular centre-right ears - it is a rare opportunity to leave domestic cares behind

and appear respected and chotically depressed French statesman-like abrnad. Although the meeting has been planned since last November, it fits neatly into a tactical switch of roles between Mr Juppé and his patron and boss. President Jacques Chirac.

For long periods last year, President Chirac appeared to spend more time abroad than in France. For the five months up to December, he said barely a word on domestic issues. This year he has already let it be known that he will take over Mr Juppé's pole position as salesman of the extraordinary array of political, economic and social reforms started since he was elected in May 1995. This will also make him the spearhead of the centre-right campaign in the parliamentary

elections in spring next year.

The reason for the switch is debatable. Some commentators argue that the President has despaired of Mr Juppé's abili-

ty m connect with an almost psy-

factions within their own RPR (Gaullist) party, never mind the broader centre-right coalition. And yet Mr Chirac is unwilling to sack him, because the alternative candidates for prime minister are either too ap-

palling or too appealing (and therefore outside his control). Others argue that Mr Chirac has seen signs of a brightening horizon - unemployment down slightly; business confidence up; growth lifting on the back of strong French exports. He wants to move into the domestic front-row in time to take the credit. Either way, Mr Chirac cannot resist an election or a political scrap. It was unlikely that he would remain, Mitterrand-like, aloof in the Elysée

palace for long.

All of this points to the unhappy condition of prime min-isters under the constitution of the Fifth Republic. Mr Chirac left Mr Juppé exposed as the point and inevitably unpopular re-forms in 40 years: a shift from dirigisme and employment protectionism to a freer matter; abolition of the franc; mpprochement with Nato; abolition. of national service; reform of education, health care, social se-

curity, the justice system ... Mr Juppe has proved unable to persuade France to swallow this cornucopian menu. In part, this is because he is too much a product of the system he has a product of the system he has heen asked to change. Mr Juppé – intellectually brilliant, cold, cerebral, impatient with colleagues, although often loved by his underlings – is the epitome of the politico-bineaucratic austromacy, which believes itself tocracy which believes itself destined to rule France.

Today's lunch in Downing Street will be followed by a series of meetings in the City, organised and hosted by Douglas Hurd, a close friend of Mr Juppe's from the time when they were both foreign minister.

Swept away in go-kart mania

The message was on the answering machine on our return bome from Britain after Christmas. It was an invitation, discovered one day after the event, to attend a Tiger Cubs go-kart clinic at the house of a neighbour. We played the tape a few times more,

but still we were baffled. A go-kart clinic? Whatever it was, it sounded ominous. Jonathan, our six-year-old, became a Tiger Cub last autumn on his way to becoming a full Cub Scout later this year. The deal was that this was strictly Daddy's department. This Daddy has since learned that most other Daddies take Cub business fear-

fully seriously. It is not for mucking about. But nothing in the Tiger Cubs calendar can be quite so intimidating as the annual Pinewood Derby. Open to Cub Scouts of all ages, it is an evening of desperate com-petition with fathers and sons racing model cars down a sloping length of wooden track. It sounds fun, but there is a catch. The cars have to be made at home out of sev-

en-inch blocks of very unforgiving wood.

Therein is the skill of it all. And the agony.

The clinic; if only we had not missed it.

The surgeon-in-chief whose wife had left the phone message had been John and he, I know, is a man whose basement is fairly ammed with things like chisels and, most of all, a vice. Usborne Towers is not so rich-

ं **ह्या 👓**

and the chisel a putty knife.

You do, at teast, have an official "Pinewood Derby Kit" from which to work. Provided is the block of wood, four nails to serve as axles and four plastic wheels. And there are instructions. The notion that Jonathan was meant to be making this thing on his own was plainly ludicrous. No six-year-old could do this.

The instructions turn out to be a rule-sheet. Wheel bearings, washers and bushings are prohibited ... The car shall not ride on springs ... Dry graphite is the only lubricant permitted ... no starting devices ... "Most crucial are the dimensions and weight. Wheels must be "zo of an inch from the car's body.

The vehicle must not weigh more than 50z.
I decide to team up with William, an English friend. Together we hit the local hardware stores only to be met by giggles and ridicule. We might as well have worn signs that read "Hopeless Fathers About to Let Down Their Sons". My vintage English fret-saw with its crooked blade caused particular uproar. "In this country, sir, saws like

thet would be disposable. What I needed was a new coping saw, his they had all gone to all the other father making cars. It must be said that what the big night comes, neither of our cars are a disgrace. William's model is almost said, although ours boasts a rather special windscreen and steering wheel arrangement supped from some of Jonathan's Lego sets. By our cars were mere Trabants next to the Ferraris produced by post of the other parents. Just produced by most of the other preents. Just how many hours and how many chars did you people spend, I want to show out. The The races are in a series of that's with

three cars hurtling down the trail at a time.
Some fathers crane intently confidence.

One is roundly reprimanded by Cub meter after he is caught red-handed supplied last-minute graphite on his axies.

The brilliance of it all is how the British entrants perform. We are persistent placers, which means all humiliation for the regional Cub Scout mass. Nor two suffer the embarrassum at an annual cub suffer the em we suffer the embarrassurant of and English father, Andy, who last year awarded a special prize for a car that inclearly been made by his child stone, so tenly crude was its design and finish. His of course, had had nothing to do with the Dayid User.

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Lack of incentives sparks show of apathy for Pakistan poll

Lahore

Pakistani voters will choose a Prime Minister today after a sluggish campaign most notable for its belaboured cricket metaphors, mudslinging, and promises to eliminate the corruption which has practically bankrupted the

The man tipped to win is the former Prime Minister, Mian Mo- Leghari and his ten-member Counhammed Nawaz Sharif, 47, who is cil for Defence and National Securilikely to need a coalition in order to ty. Policy decisions must be reviewed

that the turnout will be poor, since voters will not have the usual finanincentives under new regulations

At rallies for Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League candidate, a caged lion cub would sometimes be let out and led through the crowds. Any new Prime Minister will be similarly shackled by President Farooq

t up a government. Analysts predict by military chiefs of staff, thus for- were radically different from her a vote before. "On polling day, there become forceful. "If we do get into Benazir Bhutto, the premier oust-

ed by Mr Leghari in November, accused the President of being a "turncoat and an opportunist who wants a docile prime minister. He would like to rig these elections and be has 26 computers in the Presidency already hooked up to major polling stations." From her Larkana stronghold, the Pakistan People's Party leader asserted that if today's returns admitting that he had never even cast of his son, Khan's speech delivery has

accept them. She said that results in 63 of the 207 constituencies would be

Foreign observers are monitoring today's elections, but the likelihood of widespread voting fraud also worry former cricketing hero Imran Khan, a first timer with his untested party, Tehreek-i-Insaaf (Movement for Justice). "It's not going to be a free end of five months on the campaign and fair election." he said yesterday.

malising the army's role which has narrow victory in 1993, she would not are physical threats from various Parliament, we will be the best opbeen a constant in modern Pakistan. accept them. She said that results in mafias. And we have no money to position." Khan said. "The two othmafias. And we have no money to

transport voters to the polls." Mr Khan set a new agenda for reform in these elections with his idealistic Islamic utopianism, modelled roughly on Malaysia. His calls for a clean-up were echoed by his main rivals, even though both have been accused of large-scale corruption. By the trail, with only a week off for the birth

er parties are declining, but whatever our result is, we have a basis for the

Mr Khan might link up with independent religious parties. He is acceptable to fundamentalists because of his commitment to Sharia law. If his Teltreek-i-Insaaf manifesto were to be strictly followed, he says both his opponents in this election would be



Nawaz Sharif: Likely winner

Hopes rise for end to Peru hostage crisis

Phil Davison Latin America Correspondent

Hopes for a peaceful end to the Peruvian hostage crisis rose somewhat after a weekend meeting in Toronto between Peru's President, Alberto Fujimori, and the Japanese Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto.

Mr Fujimori said preliming y talks with Tupac Amaru galerrillas occupying the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima would hegin soon, with mediators from Canada, Japan, the International Red Cross and the Cathulic Church, But his refusal to bow to the rebels' main demand - for the release of 400 jailed comrades - suggested the drama could drag on for weeks. And he warned that if any of the 72 hostages fell ill, he would consider storming the huilding. Mr Fujimori is to meet the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, in Wash-

on today to brief her. After the 90-minute summit meeting in Toronto, Nestor Cerpa, the leader of the Tupac Amaru guerrillas in the residence, said deadlock continued because they were sticking to their demand for the release of prisoners, while Mc Fujimori

Diplomats in Lima, however, suid Mr Cerpa's long to have been for public consumplion while, in informal contacts with the authorities, the tebels may be prepared to setthe for the release of some chief, Nestor Cerpa, during leading prisoners or simply betan interview in the residence

Tokyo and Lima agree to talks with guerrilla group

ter prison conditions. The Tupac Amaru's spokesman in Europe, Isaac Velasco, said yesterday: "We have said from the beginning that our global position is negotiable. We are not going to maintain our glob-al proposal 100 per cent." This appeared to suggest Mr Cerpa, a former textile-union negotiator, might bargain with the government to find a way to get his

14-strong guerrilla unit out of the siege alive, to a jungle hideout or a country such as Cuba. In interviews yesterday, Mr Fujimori said that, in the agen-da for the coming talks, the rebels had agreed not to mention the demand for the release

of their jailed comrades. "For

us this is an advance," he said. Saturday's Toronto meeting was the first time Mr Fujimori and Mr Hashimoto had met since the rebels stormed a diplomatic garden party on 17 December. They apparently chose Canada because its ambassador to Lima, Anthony Vincent, will be on the mediation team and so that neither would be seen to be losing face.

Mr Hashimoto had ex-

pressed concern that Mr Fujimori may be leaning towards a

The Japanese Prime Minister strongly criticised provocative police manoeuvres outside the besieged compound last week, when police taunts led the rebels to fire at an acrooured police vehicle.

In Toronto, Mr Fujimori admitted the police actions had been "inappropriate." But he added: "To the extent

that there is no harm to the hostages, no force will be used. eral hostages are taken ill, that would not satisfy the conditions I have set.'

With the siege about to move into its eighth week, the chances of hostages falling sick are



Real life: Beauty with Candle by Chen Yifei, the painter who is finally finding favour in his home land Courtesy: Marlborough Fine Arts (London) Ltd

Japanese PM wriggles on horns of a dilemma

Richard Lloyd Parry

The hostage crisis in Peru has by the unique relationship between Lima and Tokyo, and the domestic agenda of the Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto. At the emergency summit in Toronto at the weekend he "reaffirmed his full confidence" in Peru's handling of the situa-tion, a curiosity, since last week he was telling his own people the opposite. What was cleardan ever was the Tupac the ru's cunning in choosing the residence of the Japanese unbassador for the drama.

To Peru, Japan is more than inst a rich trading partner: it is its biggest foreign benefactor, and the ancestral home of tens of thousands of its people, up to and including its president.

More than 96bn yen (£500m) of development loans are tied

More importantly, from the Tupac Amaru's point of view. Japan has a poor record of cri-

sis management, a squeamishness about the sufferings of its citizens ahroad and a history of caving in th terrorism. Of all Peru's friends, Japan was always going to be least tolerant of a hard line and with most leverage in apply, in terms of supplementing its aid packages or withdrawing them. Fujimori certainly knows that if he decides to pull a Rambo against Tokyn's wishes, the muncy pipeline from Japan will be shut down instantly," said John Neuffer, senior research fellow

at Mitsui Marine Research. Apart from the ambassador, the 72 hostages include em-ployees of some nf Japan's iggest corporations.

During his 12 months in power Mr Hashimoto has cre-

as the aggressive champion of administrative and financial reform. But in the hostage crisis he is almost helpless.

Japan has no special forces able to aid citizens overseas; in any case, its "peace" constitu-tion makes dispatch of troops overseas a political minefield. Mr Hashimoto is in danger of appearing more and more like a hit-player. It was this impression that the summit in Toronto was intended to

Technically. Mr Hashimoto could have the final say: the ambassadnr's residence counts as Japanese territury and should a direct assault become the only option (if any harm

hina welcomes home prodigal artist son

one of the country's ageing deputy prime ministers past the larger-than-life, full-frontal female attractions of Reclining Nude towards the safer territory of his portrait of a (fully clothed) Young Cellist.

As the posse of black-raincoated making consists of finish sympths. have pioneered a new commercial

status for modern Chinese art. Last October, for instance, Love Song, which portrays a Chinese couple playing musical instruments, sold at auction in Peking for 1.98m yuan (£150,000). Four of his recent henchmen whether it might be appropriate to offer the VIP a glass of wine. "He does not drink," barked Tibetan series have also sold in recent months, making a total of

around £450,000. For 50-year-old Chen Yifei, the current show is his first in China since he departed for the United States in 1980. It opened just before Christmas in Shanghai, his home town, where Chen was besieged by adoring fans delighted that a local artist had achieved such

vice-Prime Minister, Zou Jiahua, the official opening was attended by Li Ruihuan, a standing-committee member of the Politburo no less.

It was not always thus. Chen graduated from art college in Shanghai just as the Cultural Revolution started. It was a mixed time for the young artist. His technical skills and draughtsmanship were employed churning out socialist realist propaganda art, punctuated by periods of criticism for lack of revolutionary ardour. His heroic portrait of a Chinese soldier. Eulogy of the Yellow River, was attacked for using colours which were "too soft". Chen said: "At that time all the paintings should be 'red' and 'hright'." The most serious trouble was over Red Flag whose realistic depiction of soldiers in battle was attacked for "propagating the burrors of war".

By the end of the Cultural Revolution. Chen's parents persecuted as both intellectuals and Christians - had died. In his career, however, his technical skills had triumphed over political criticism and he emerged as one of China's most important modern artists.
"Fate", as he puts it, led to an opportunity to move to the US in 1980, where he was taken up by Armand Hammer's gallery and launched down the artistic path towards riches.

Financial wellbeing has come easier then critical acclaim for his near-photographic style of painting. "I worked as a picture restorer for one year when I arrived in the US." he said. "So I wanted to try to use the Western, very traditional painting techniques." The must recent works, giant canvases of Tibetan people, have become more impressionistic, but Chen still bristles at the "political reasons" why Western critics prefer abstract or avant-garde art as an expression of new freedoms in China.

While Chen may gripe at critics, his financial success looks assured. Marlborough Fine Art intends to exhibit him at several international art fairs this year, and will hold a London show with his work in June. According to Chen, his parents wanted him to fullnw in his father's footsteps as a chemical engineer because "artists were always poor".

hringing an art show to Peking. But at least the London gallery, Mariborough Fine Art, had been befell the hostages, for in-stance), he would be asked for forewarned of the ban nn nails for hanging paintings at the exhibition venue, the China National Museum of Fine Arts. Yards of golden chain had instead been brought to secure ated an image as a dynamic leader, in contrast with his prehis consent. decessor, who was paralysed by If he said nn, he would apa number of disasters in 1995, pear culpably weak-kneed; if he international commercial acclaim. including the Kobe earthquake said yes, he would have to the huge oil canvases and smaller This weekend the exhibition and Takyo subway gas attack. Last year Mr Hashimoto suface the consequences of a drawings for "The Homecoming of transferred to Peking, where the VIP shoot-out. However tough his Chen Yifei", a retrospective of the guest-list indicated more than a pervised talks with the US on public image, it is a chnice which would bring nothing cuntemporary mainland painter whose "romantic realism" paintings passing interest from government leaders. As well as the 70-year-old reducing hases nn Okinawa and since his re-electinn in Oc-

It could have been a tricky

manoeuvre. But with utmost skill

and without a word, China's most

successful modern painter guided

public-security officials roughly

elbowed out of the way anyone conceivably near the path of the 70-year-old government official, a

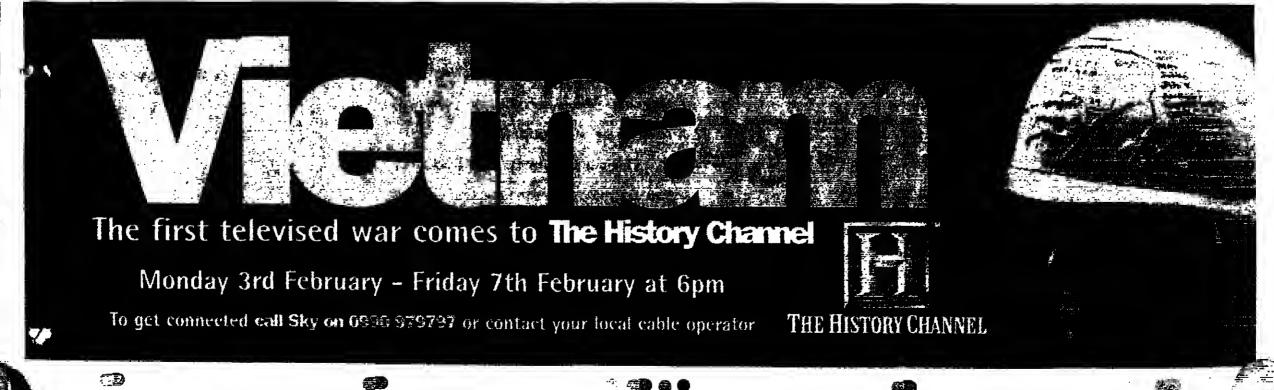
organising British gallery asked the

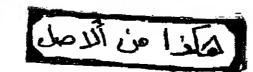
back the bodyguard, shoving her to

Such are the challenges of

seninr representative from the

one of the country's ageing deputy





Icy grip of fear returns to haunt Albanian streets

Brutal crackdown brings night raids and torture

Andrew Gumbel

Alhanian authorities have rounded up, arrested and beaten hundreds of young meo all over the country, sending some for "special treatment" in the capital, Tirana, and herding the rest into local police stations in a ruthless attempt to scare the

restive population off the streets. In the southern town of Berat and in other provincial towns in the area, the atmosphere is icy with fear. Not only will ordinary people not speak. they will not even sit at the same table as visiting journalists. The towns are crawling with police and with sinister men with short

ets who stare at everyone who asses. Only the bravest describe how the police, some of whom are masked, set up roadblocks and swooped oo homes at three in the morning.

The repression in progress is by far the most brutal in Albania since the dying days of the Communist regime in 1990. According to the government's own figures, 247 people have been arrested with the charge that they were responsible for the destruction of state property in last Sunday's riots, and 72 committed to trial. In repeated bulletins, state television has announced that the proof against this hard core is overwhelming

cropped hair and leather jack- and they can expect to serve up to 15 years in prison,

The exteot of the repression appears to be much wider than officially acknowledged. The Independent has seen detailed evidence of more than 200 people having heeo rounded up in Berat alone. Of these, 46 have heen seot to Tirana, 30 have been released and 120 or more have been crammed into two tiny rooms in the police station.

Those released have all been treated for beatings, and bave reported appalling violence and torture. The doctors involved are so terrified that their official diagnoses include such surreal conditions as "axial neurosis" and "toxic influenza". In



Taken in: The opposition trade union leader, Azam Hajdari (centre), being arrested by police in Tirana yesterday

Tirana is unknown.

schemes entering its final, most

devastating phase, the govern-

private, the same doctors say . nels. some of the released detainees are too roughed up to move.

Unconfirmed reports also suggest that the latest prisoners, too numerous for the police station, are being held in sewers and underground military tun-

peat of the nots that pushed the country to the brink of chaos a week ago, and bewildered about The fate of those sent to With the crisis over Albania's how to prepare its people for failed pyramid investment

This week, the state is supposed to begin compensating

it is not clear that it will be able to do so. The largest of the the next round of bad news. people with assets frozen from

schemes still in operation, involving hundreds of thousands of investors and hundreds of millions of dollars, are just a step away from collapse. Their disappearance would almost certainly bring the government crashing down with them.

> worst-hit by the wave of arrests, partly because it saw some of the worst violence last weekend and partly because it is a traditional Socialist Party stronghold that hitterly resents the looming presence of the ruling Democratic Party, which has taken power locally through a mix of intimidation and electoral fraud.

Berat is the Albanian town

The arrests appear to be targeted at anyone who might try to stir up trouble. Relatives' at-

Photograph: Michel Euler/Al tempts to locate detainees have

proved fruitless. The government is due to begin pay-outs on Wednesday. but it is not clear if these will be in cash or in some kind of bond or voucher. Either way, a major issue of currency risks triggering hyperinflation. The lek has already nose-dived against the

dollar in the past few days. The authorities are praying that the biggest scheme, run by the conglomerate Vefa, can keep going since the company is the Albanian equivalent of General Motors - if it blows, the whole country blows. But Vela-has defaulted on its investment contracts, withholding customers' capital, paying interest in lek even on hard-currency deposits (at a terrible exchange rate), and cutting its interest rate

Jail grenade fuels biker-gang feud

Copenhageo (AP) — An anti-tank grenade was fired into a prison housing members of the Bandidos biker gang early yes-

tified as Paul Andersen, who is beiog held peodiog trial in connection with the October anti-tank greoade attack on the Hell's Angels' compound in Copeohageo, Deomark, in which two people were killed and 19 injured.

Police said several people with ties to the Hell's Angels with yesterday's 4am attack oo cials have said that grenades the jail in Koege, 12 miles used in previous attacks were south of Copenhageo. They believed to have been stolen did not give further details. The Hell's Angels and Ban-

didos gangs have been fer, ag for three years in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

The gang war has left 10 reo-ple dead and more than 50 in-Police said the grenade, fired from a nearby highway, apparently did not, explode after hreaking through the cell window. Oslo. Norway, in which one pandidos member was killed and four were injured: ..

Yesterday's attack was the first time in the feud that an anti-tank grenade was used against the Bandidos. At least nine greoades have been launched against the Hell's An-

gels or their allies. Police said the grenage fired yesterday was of unspecified Eastern European origin. Offifrom lightly guarded military depots in Sweden.

significant shorts

Armed gang kills 31 in Algerian massacre

A band of men armed with knives and axes killed 31

A bank of their article with knives and access that of the people in an Algerian town south of the capital Algier, the newspaper El Watan reported.

Some 50 men led the attack just after midnight on Friday, invading a neighbourhood in Medea, and forcing residen into the street where they were killed and then beheaded by a dwarf, the paper quoted residents as saying. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the massacre, but suspicion fell on Muslim militants. A source close to security forces said they believed the 31 were related to a

dissident member of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). About 310 people are known to have been killed, and some 600 injured, in attacks since the start of the Muslim festival of Ramadan on 10 January.

AP/Reuters - Algiers/Paris

Bulgaria protests hit the road Protesters blocked main roads in Bulgaria as leaders of the ruling Socialist Party met to try to form a new

government, ignoring four weeks of daily opposition rallies and calls for immediate elections. Bulgaria is edging towards economic collapse and urgently needs a credible government to negotiate with foreign lenders and set up a fixed exchange rate regime to restore confidence in the national currency. Reuters

Bombs explode over Corsica 💆

More than 50 bombs exploded early vesterday all around Corsica in a wave of violence unprecedented in recent years. The Corsican National Liberation Front-Historic Branch claimed responsibility for the 56 pre-dawn attacks in a three-page communiqué sent to local media. No one was hurt in the bombings which targeted hanks and government buildings. Police later detained three people for questioning, saying that the three were close to the Cuncolta Nazionalista, the legal arm of the Liberation Front-Historic Branch. The bombings came after France cracked down last week on the separatist movement.

Israel-Palestine 'hope'

Israeli and Palestinian leaders, in what they called positive and productive talks, agreed at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos to meet again on Thursday for

detailed talks oo extending Palestinian self-rule. The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, Said the agreement reflected "a great feeling of hope" and that he was confident that he and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat could overcome the obstacles to Middle



We'll go on listening even when you can't go on talking.

Every year at The Samaritans we receive over a million totally silent phone calls. For whatever reason, the callers can't begin to tell us what's troubling them.

Equally, callers who do start may be unable to go on - many hang up halfway through a conversation, or simply go quiet.

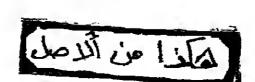
With all of these callers, though, we have one golden rule: we never stop listening. We won't be the ones to hang up or say goodbye.

Our number's in the phone book, or you can call our new national number on 0345 90 90 90. Every call is confidential. Even if you can't talk we'll listen.

The Samaritans. We'll go through it with you.

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to school? Homework to be dou-

bled? The Lord's Prayer, God Save

the Queen and the new Clause IV to

become part of the national curricu-

lum? No, no, it was school uniform:

huminous blazers to make it easier for

conscientious citizens to detect cur-

few-breakers who are not doing their

be easy to oppose school uniform.

Few of us liked it when we were at

school. But Mr Blunkett is, we have

to admit with some regret, utterly

right. Training shoes with flashing

lights in the heels present too strong

It is, essentially, the "flashing train-

The wishiest of washy liberals is

now in favour of school uniform

because they are opposed to fashion

one-up-personship, just as they are

opposed to all competitive sports. It

is not fair on children from poor fam-

ilies to allow them to be visibly out-

done in designer labels or expensive

Reeboks. As soon as they are old

Saddam still

UN demands

Rangwala (letters, 28 January) argue that sanctions help Saddam.

I strongly disagree. May I add to

Mr Berman's points (letter, 25

January)? We should not forgel why UN

sauctions were imposed in 1990. Iraq had to be made to atone for its

illegal occupation of Kuwait and to

compensate the victims of the Gulf

War. It had to be made clear to

under Security Council

Saddam that aggression does not

pay. Sanctions were the means of forcing Iraq to meet its obligations

Iraq has not complied. On the

mass destruction capability. He has

provided no compensation to war

victims, including many Britons.

property. He has accounted for

Mr Rangwala defends Iraq's

right to possess weapons. The UN

Security Council does not demand

He has returned no Kuwaiti

none of the over 600 missing

Kuwaiti and third country

the destruction of Iraq's

conventional weapons; it does

demand - rightly - that Iraq's

weapons of mass destruction be

Before the Gulf war Iraq possessed enough chemical and

biological weapons to destroy the

world's population several times

over. Saddam's plans to procure

and produce such lethal weapons

pose a severe risk to the security of

the region. They must be foiled for good. Until they are, sanctions must stay. The UN Security

Saddam's failure to meet the

UN's demands prolongs the Iraqi

people's suffering. He oppresses his people ruthlessly, with a

sickening disregard for human

rights. He spends Iraq's scarce

helping to alleviate the Iraqi

people's suffering. We co-

to sell oil to finance food,

humanitarian projects. About

Iraqi people over the first six

making us the second largest

I fear that the Iraqi people

cannot expect to live anything like a

normal life while Saddam remains.

They would certainly be better off

The RI Hon JEREMY HANLEY MP

Minister of State for Foreign and

Foreign & Commonwealth Office London SWI

Commonwealth.Affairs

donor.

without him.

months. We have already given

medicines and essential

reserves on military procurement

and lavish palaces for his own use. The UK has been active in

sponsored UN Security Council

Resolution 986 which allows Iraq

£800m worth of aid will flow to the

them over £90m in aid since 1991,

Council is unanimous on this.

nationals.

contrary. Saddam continues to

conceal his residual weapons of

flouting

Sir: Dr al-Rubeai and Mr

ers" argument which has swung the

pendulum hack from the liberalism

With our liberal leanings, it would

homework.

an argument.

of the Seventies.

Mr ere

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Diver the

Uniforms, yes: but the issue is standards hat David Blunkett was on the (usually when they cease to be Infants television yesterday morning, hut it was so early - what was he talking about again? Children to and become Juniors), put them in uniform salute the Union flag on their way in

Mr Blunkett reflects the shift in mood. He was leader of Sheffield council in 1981 when it decided its schools could not make the wearing of uniforms compulsory. But as his sons advanced through the comprehensive education system, the more authoritarian and puritanical side of his personality came to the fore. As a parent, he voted to hring back uniforms in his sons' school in Sheffield. And yesterday he said a Labour government would encourage parents to he halloted on compulsory uniforms in all state primary and secondary

Hillary Clinton has made the same ideological journey in America, where uniforms are rare. Most American schools simply have dress codes - "no knives to be worn outside the pants", that kind of thing hut she told the Democratic Convention last year that she wanted school uniforms back.

There is one other good argument in favour of school uniforms: it is that pupils are more recognisable outside schools, which acts as a disincentive to truancy, and makes it easier for teachers to tend their charges.

For the rest, arguments for and enough to want Umbro and Nike against are either trivial, or bad. A



ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E145DL TELEPHONE 0171-293 2000 / 0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 2435 / 0171-345 2485

delightfully attractive but not at all compelling reason for having uniform is that it gives pupils something relatively harmless to rebel against. Instead of hreaking up phone boxes or cutting up bus seats, they can focus their energies on how to tie the biggest knot with the shortest wide bit, or how they can make their skirts

shorter by hitching up the waisthand. Poor arguments are mostly sepiatinted. Getting rid of school uniforms, the hlimpish right argues, symbolised the arrival of permissiveness: casual clothes in school blurred the distinction between

teacher and pupil, learning and sloth. order and anarchy. Beyond the marginal effect on pupils in signalling that school is different from the rest of life, none of this stands up to scrutiny. But the Tory press will now co-opt Mr Blunkett for the most archaic forms of dress, in their nostalgic reverie of blazers and ties, gymslips and tunics. And the full Bufton Tufton Memorial Kit probably costs far more than any Blue Bolt, Calvin Klein or Fila. In practice, most schools strike a sensihle balance between cost, practicality and smartness. Ties, for example, are not necessary.

is that they tend to go for a pick 'n' mix approach to uniforms. They tend to go for "soft" uniforms, with many of the elements optional, or even just a tightened up dress code. That defeats the point, which is, to state the obvious, uniformity. Whatever is agreed should be narrowly defined and sensibly but firmly enforced.

That is our opinion, it is Gillian Shephard's and now it is David Blunkett's too. But the important point is that no government should dictate these things. It should be up to parents and staff, and in some degree pupils, to decide. Giving pupils a say is a good way of encouraging responsibility; a uniform imposed by consent after debate is much likelier to be respected.

Of course, dress codes and school uniforms, like flags and prayer in the United States, are essentially peripheral matters, used for their symbolism by politicians of all stripes because the real issues that matter in education are much harder to tackle. Pupils wearing uniforms don't make for better teachers, nor do they instantly become cleverer: they just create a better climate for organising learning. So this is just a Monday morning before the election gets properly under way leading article: the serious debate should be about

The trouble with the wishy-washies whether Chris Woodhead is correct to claim that 15,000 teachers are not up to scratch. Last week it emerged that his own inspectors had only found 4,500 substandard ones, and he responded by saying his staff were just being too lax in their judgments. Let's not forget that all this fuss about school uniforms, which is after all designed to gratify the Daily Mail and its readers more than The Independent and its leader writers, is merely incidental in the crusade to raise standards.

A plug for the sea breeze

Arc you a Luddite Don Quixote, tilling at wind turbines spreading their visual pollution across Wales and the Lake District? Or a techno-greenie like Jonathon Porritt, who thinks that wind farms are beautiful, as well as being the alternative to planelwarming fuel-hurning? On halance, we're with Mr Porritt, although we know that they're noisy and don't want too many more of them on our hills. Surely the answer is, as we reported last year, to float them at sea. And to tax fossil fuels into the ground, where they belong.

- LETTERS TO THE EDITOR -



high-quality taxis, each sharing them with two other occupants making similar journeys, this would save them £33 and they would only be responsible for 40kg of CO₂. The journeys might take a bit longer while other people were picked up and dropped off en route but during this time they could

read, work, phone etc. What we need to develop in this country is the information infrastructure that would allow people making similar journeys to he matched together in this way and feed these matched jnurney requirements to the taxi companies for execution.

Possibly John Major's guests could discuss the method of

achieving this during their lunch. researching it on the way there, and actioning it on the way home.
PETER MILLER Community Technology Ltd Cambridge

Sir. It's worrying that J M Murphy (letter, 1 February) evokes that old chestnut, the "taxpayer" argument, to justify misgivings over the A30

All Swampy and colleagues did was to exercise their right in a democratic society to freedom of speech.

The sinister but logical extension of the Murphy view is that we, as taxpayers, should not support any form of protest - for example by funding the policing of marches.

Preedom of speech is use-

will be lost, and we'll all end up doing what we're told. TIM CHEEK Cambridge

Right balance for their political and economic single-sex wards

Sir: As Stephen Dorrell points out, single-sex wards would indeed protect the privacy and dignity of patients ("Mixed-sex wards axed by Dorrell , 28 January), but could the policy - with no margin for flexibility for ward managers - not cause a further rise in waiting times for acute beds?

A male patient with an acute medical or surgical complaint, having to wait for a male bed to become available on a partitioned ward with only a female bed available, could be put at risk. JAMES TEMLETT

Irish gave up own tongue

Sir: To this native of Northern Ireland the general thrust of Canon Nicholas Frayling's call for England to face up to its guilt in Ireland ("Britain owes Ireland an apology" 29 January) seems difficult to gainsay. However, on one detail his mea culpa is too strident. England did not rob the Irish people of their language; the historical evidence suggests that they threw this

beautiful and ancient tongue away. Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), the Liberator, a fluent Irish speaker himself, refused to teach it to his children and urged his countrymen to speak English on the grounds that this would further emancipation. Many followed his

It is true that in the later 19th century English was the medium of instruction in the Irish national educational system and speaking Irish was harshly discouraged in schools. However, the damage had already been done before the advent of mass education and, in any case, it should be noted that similar official disapproval did not wipe out Welsh or Scots Gaelic to anything like the same extent. They, however, were able to take refuge from the public dominance of English in the Chapel and Kirk. But in the Catholic chapels Latin ruled supreme and Irish had

nowhere to go. This having been said, fluency in Irish, acquired in school, is valued by many in the nationalist community in the North. As a gesture, why should the language not be given official parity with English in the Six Counties? The Rev PETER HATTON Droitwich, Worcestershire

Naafi with sole

Sir: "Stewed vegetables, tough pork chops and bromide tea" does not sum up Naafi food ("Forces say farewell to the Naafi, 75 years on", 29 January). The grilled Dover sole in the Naafi Club at Portsmouth in 1947 was superb; in the succeeding half century I have never had any quite as good. THK BARRON

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number.

Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk).

E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Best way to boycott oil?

Sir: I normally buy Total petrol. It is cheap, the local Total garage is convenient for my home, and they run a tempting "pomts" scheme. However, since, as you reported on 31 January, Total is in partnership with the Burmese state oil company, I considered changing to another brand in protest against human rights ahuse in Burma, but

have decided not to. If, through a boycott of its products, Total were to disengage from Burma, it would have to source its oil from somewhere else Iraq? Iran? Algeria? Almost all major producer countries are,

frankly, tyrannies.
All oil comes mixed with bloodnearly all nil products come from crude that has been blended from various sources, and there is no way that I know of ensuring that the petrol from your neighbourhood pump is exclusively of North Sea or North American origin. JAMES SCOTT Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

Our film was fair

Sir: Your reviewer has some criticism of Ken Loach's Carla's Song, which I produced (Tabloid, 30 January). That is his right, but there is one aspect of his piece which I find offensive. It is the suggestion that by portraying "all-singin', all dancin' Sandinistas" we impose our own foreign, patronising,

many screenings there - for them it clearly has the ring of truth. An earlier film of Ken's. Ladybird, Ladybird, opens with a karaoke scene in a pub. The reallife Maggie (on whom the film was hased) and Chrissie Rock (the actress who played her) shared a love of karaoke. While we were in Nicaragua, Oyanka Cabezas had a family birthday - the centrepiece, in common with many Nicaraguan parties, was a highly charged dance, the Palo de Mayo. Both scenes echo their own reality. SALLY HIBBIN

view of life in Nicaragua. In the film, Carla is part of a cultural brigade, a

morale. Their show was devised by people who did precisely that in the Eighties. We recorded their reality

and show it in the film. This is not a

romanticised version of the war, it

is how the Nicaraguans chose to present themselves and - judging

by the reactions of the people at the

group of dancers and musicians

who tour the war zones to boost

Producer, Parallax Pictures Lid London WC2

Factory decline Sir Does Hamish McRae ("The

other problem with jobs bought from the Japanese", 31 January) not realise that it is precisely because manufacturing jobs are of less worth than the more highly paid "higher-skilled" positions in finance, marketing and advertising that UK manufacturing has declined to its current level? Without manufacturing what would be propose to advertise. market or finance? PAUL ROGERS Wells, Somerset

Food safety body needs powers

Sir. The description "a food safety chief, independent but answerable to ministers" is an oxymoron ("Cahinet concedes need for food safety supremo", 30 January).

The actual safety of food is what we require, not the perception of safety. The question we should ask is 'would such a body have prevented the BSE risks? The answer to this is no. They migh! bave reduced the problems after the 1988 and 1989 bans, but no more than that.

A useful body would have to have powers over animal feed and additives, such as the American FDA is using al present to ban the use of meat and bonemeal in feed.

We should cease being hypocritical about how our food is produced and how the inevitable waste is disposed of or recycled, by renderers (and compounders). Prevention of bad practices requires a sufficient food premises inspectorate (which could have prevenled the E coli outbreak).

The restoration and funding of veterinary research laboratories and the veterinary inspectorate, together with the encouragement of medical/veterinary and international research collaboration, are what is required to stave off further comparable diseases. We should learn from our mistakes. ANNE C MADDOCKS.

Spongiform Encephalopathy Research Campaign Chislelwast, Kent

Sir: David Gordon (letter, 31 January) replies to my letter of 27 January and points out that farming systems still exist which allow animals a reasonable life and appropriate food, and which also imise environmental damage.

However there is insufficient land available for our present number of farm animals to be reared in the ways that Mr Gordon describes. Large intensive farms are therefore a major factor in soil erosion and descrification throughout the world. For example, in the United States, 85 per cent of topsoil loss is

due to livestock ranching. We can only feed the world's human population in an environmentally sustainable way if people in the West eat more vegetarian and vegan food. Instead we waste too many valuable crops by feeding them 10 animals. This wastes between 75 and 90 per cent of the protein and energy value. In 1993 the "Worldwatch Report"

said that "if we in the rich industrial nations do not cat less meat, the world will starve" RICHARD MOUNTFORD Birmingham

Cold comfort

Sir: I sympathise with Colin Dunn and his request for advice on how to react without giving offence when a young woman, full of cold, sniffling and sneezing, takes the adjacent seat on a long train journey (letter, 31 January).

It would be terribly rude to cause her any embarrassment, so when this happens to me I always endeavour to outsneeze the lady.

This puts her at ease. I act out symptoms of such severity that she will understand that it does not

matter if I catch her cold. Usually the young ladies are so overwhelmed by my thoughtfulness that they choose to sit clsewhere, so I can enjoy my demise in peace. JOE BOSWELL London N4

dependent: we either use it or lose If the Murphy view is upheld, it

New statesman or new conspirator?

here goes my peerage, said Geoffrey Rob-inson MP when Geoffrey he saw the cover of the New Statesman the first issue after its redesign. It sported a Steve Bell cartoon that depicted the Royal Family as a line of prostitutes on a street cor-ner, with Lady Di leaning into the window of a kerb-crawler, Robinson, who has not long taken over as the magazine's owner, seemed genuinely taken Cabinet seat? aback by the sight. Anyone who knows Ian Har-Or more, asks

greaves, quondam editor of this newspaper and now in the chair at the *Statesman*, would not have heeu surprised. Not by the cartoon. But by the fact that he had not troubled to show it to the proprietor until it was too late to change it. So if it is not a peerage, what

exactly is it that has motivated Robinson in his decision to huy he loss-making magazine? Conventional wisdom has it that he is after a seat in the Cabinet. Such were the judgements aired over the summer when he lent Tony Blair his villa in Tuscany for a family holiday.

Robinson, a former managing director of Jaguar Cars, has built up a fortune of at least £30m on the side over the past decade while serving quietly very quietly - as a Labour MP. He is just the man to give business credibility to a Labour cabment of Trade and Industry.

Robinson is an MP, a tycoon and now a publisher. What does he want next? A

Machiavellian theory has begun to emerge - that Robinson is laying the ground for some future plot to oust Tony Blair as leader and replace him with the

Paul Vallely

arise," said one who is close to the heart of new Labour. "In the Parliamentary Labour Party people are signed up as Brown

Once Brown and Blair were inseparable. Now there is an emerging tension. I wouldn't want to overstate it, but it's a

ting more pronounced. Cer-tainly some of the more fac-tional Blairites see the New

Statesman as a Brown organ."
There is no ground so fecund for conspiracy theory as a political party – particularly one that feels itself at the portals of

It is true that Brown's heutenant, Ed Balls, played a sig-nificant role in the plot to secure for new Labour. The chance came last Christmas, when the magazine's previous bankroller, Philip Jeffrey, the socialist millionaire who founded the Fads DIY chain, withdrew funding and put it into administration. Jeffrey had intended to huy it back from the administrators, Grant Thornton, on terms that would allow him greater control. But the administrators' duty to seek the highest bidder provided the grounds for a grand plot in which the key new Labour courtiers – the spin doctor Peter Mandelson, the press strategist Alastair Campbell and Blair's chief-of-staff, Jonathan

Powell, all became involved. At its heart was Mr Balls. who became the main intermediary between the party machiavels, the magazine's staff and the man who was persuaded to stump up the asking price -£125,000, plus £250,000 pay off its debts - Geoffrey

Robinson. There is no doubt that Robinson is a wheeler-dealer. He is a relaxed, affable character who

does not come across like the

boss of a metal-bashing company, or even an old-style Labour MP. His image is more that

of a star-struck celebrity lawyer. "His manner is diffident, almost bumbling and mettective", said one friend, "but it belies a sharp mind. He's actually very clever. He thinks quickly, reads people and situations fast and makes swift

'Things get done around him," said another. "In conversation you think he's not concentrating on what you're saying, but the next day he'll make some incisive remark about it." That Robinson is an achiever

is beyond dispute. His wealth supports a portfolio of interests worthy of a Renaissance man: business, architecture, cars, painting, football and science. Almost certainly Labour's richest MP, he owns an eightbedroomed Lutyens home near Godalming, Surrey, where his opera singer wife, Marie Elena Giorgio, lives, as well as his own penthouse overtooking Park

Robinson collects not just cars – which include not one but two chauffeur-driven Jags - he also collects houses. He has recently acquired another 20bedroomed Lutvens mansion with a Gertrude Jekyll garden in Hampshire and has a flat in the

But "politics is his first love," said one acquaintance. He is

known to be a key figure in Labour's New Business Comnew business contacts for the party. Less well-known is that he is the brains behind Labour's only new fiscal strategy - the windfall tax on the public utilities. It is Robinson who has done the backroom work for Gordon Brown which has led to the extension of the tax to British Telecom and the former British Airports Authority, and the likelihood of doubling the

income from the tax to £10bn.

here are now those who are wondering whether Robinson will be given the role of adding some business bottom to a Blair cabinet in the way that Harold Lever did for the government of Harold Wilson. If so, the circle will have come full turn. It was Wilson who enticed Robinson into polious. The son of a furniture manufacturer, he graduated from Clare College, Cambridge - he speaks Russian, French, German and Italian - and vas studying economics and history

at Yale where Wilson came

across him. After serving in the

Intelligence Corps during his National Service, Robinson

Labour Research Department From there he went to the

Industrial Reorganisation Corporation, the crucible of Wilrevolution. But the reality of state planning proved sobering. Robinson, along with most of the IRC's other young corporatist planning whizzkids - who included Sir Alastair Morton (now of Euro-Tunnel), Graham Hearne (now Enterprise Oil boss) and John Gardiner (now head of the Laird Group) - left the organisation as firm advocates of market economics. "He doesn't want to see Brown and Blair make the same mistakes,"

Out in the world of industry Robinson became financial controller of British Leyland, then managing director of Ley-land Innocenti in Milan before being made chief executive of

one insider said

Jaguar Cars at the age of 33. His management style was such that when he applied to be Labour candidate for Coventry North West (the constituency that contains the Jaguar and Daimler car plants) he was adopted with the backing of even the hard-line trade unionists. This was a man bringing jobs to a declining industry, who was subsequently prepared to act as unpaid chief exec of the

Workers Co-operative. But Labour never formed a government and Rohinson was AMET IOUT YE spokesman, first on science and then on industry, he virtually dropped ont of active politics.

In 1986 be began a one-man

technology business, which is now worth £200m as the conglomerate TransTec. Robinson specialised in aerospace customers - with contracts in Japan. Spain, Russia and South Africa. Despite a hiccup in 1994, when he was pressured to split his roles as chairman and chief executive amid concerns about the company's performance and past accounting practices. TransTec has been an unmitigated success. Since Robinson appointed a new chief executive, it has made numerous acquisitions, taking a longer-term view than most venture capitalists in the field, and built a strong order book. Last year Robinson bought another £20m of shares in the firm.

His entrepreneurial flair was not universally appreciated. In 1991, the hard left in his constituency tried to deselect him on the grounds that he was an absentee MP. (He has neglected to collect a house in the constituency and stays in the local Post House when he goes up for

surgeries; during one year he did not utter a single word in the Commons chamber.) They Jaguer background heined him to hold on; many hard-line unionists wouldn't join the Militant attempt to oust him. For all that, Robinson con-

1992-93 parliamentary session in a table of the Commons' 20 worst attenders he came 19th (Fortunately, Tony Blair was With power in prospect he

tinued in his ways. During the

has returned to the scene, but is there any real evidence that he is backing Brown?
Geoffrey thinks that all pol-

ities is about the economy," said one friend. "He is scornful of the moral and constitutional agendas. He hates Jack Straw and his illiberal populism. So Brown's is the area to which he naturally gravitates." There is no doubt that he is

closer to Brown than to Blair. He backed Brown for the leadership when John Smith died. Brown and Brown's brother used his flat on the Riviera for a holiday last summer, and at Robinson's frequent and lavish parties Brown is more often in evidence than is the party leader.

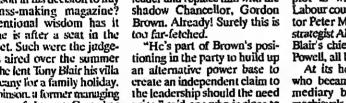
et the two men do not accord completely. Robinson is strongly opposed to a European single currency. At the last Labour conference he was actively hriefing people against the single currency and telling everyone that Blair was having second thoughts on

Those who really know him discount the notion that he is helping to position Brown for a future plot against Blair. Geoffrey is not a mischiefmaker. At 58 he is not a faction leader or even a king-maker he's been out of the swim too long to have the contacts. He's more of an uncle to Gordon.

He knows his own limitations." in the Cabmet is beyond him, too. Despite his manifest intelligence and management skills, there are those who maintain that he lacks the skills in argu-

ment to be a Cabinet minister. But owning the New Statesman gives him a different kind of leverage. It could be that he simply thinks he can make money froso the magazine, having bought at rock bottom in the economic cycle and installed a lively editor. But there is almost certainly a double edge (as there is to his recent £5m investment in Coventry FC: the cash is earmarked to bring on young players and Robinson gets a cut of the transfer fee if they are sold). The crunch for new Labour could come early - over public sector pay, over tax, over a European single currency. If Brown and Blair did split, the voice of the new, improved New Statesman might be potent.

The integrity of lan Hargreaves might prove a stumbling block to a partisan proprietorial position. But then editors for. can always be sacked. For the time being. Geoffrey Robinson is a man to be carefully watched.



or Blair supporters.

But in recent weeks a more potential faultline and it is get-



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When twigs were twogs and the silly song ruled

Bailey is a one-off", wrote James Rampton in the Comedy section of this paper's Eye magazine on Salurday. "There is no other performer on earth who would think of playing Three Blind Mice in the style of Richard Clayderman...

It is always dangerous to say sweeping things like that, as I have found to my cost in the past, because there will always be some overinformed reader who will write in and point out some glaring exception to your rule. In James Rampion's case I am afraid it is going to be me, because I can think of one other performer on earth who might think of playing Three Blind Mice in the style of Richard Clayderman, and that is John

Dankworth. Not only would John Dankworth be capable of it, but he has done it. He once made a record of that very tune. Three Blind Mice. in which he parodied not just one but half a dozen

different people. Richard Clayderman was not one of them, because in the 1950s, when he made the household name, perhaps not

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even born. Dankworth chose to arrange the tune in the style of different top jazz names of the time, such as Gerry Mulligan and the Modern Jazz Quartet, and if you were a jazz fan it was a very funny record, especially the section where he played the nursery rhyme in the pretentious style of Stan Kenton, renaming this section "A Trio of Sightless Rodents".

This being the 1950s, the number came out on a 78rpm record and was. think, a modest hit for Johnny Dankworth, as he then was - at any rate, you can still find the record in some quantities in places where they still sell old 78 records. I don't suppose James

Rampton was around in those days, so he can be forgiven for heing knocked out by the exciting new idea of a musical parody using Three Blind Mice. In fact, if you are a

reviewer of comedians these days, there is no particular reason why you should connect music and comedy at all, which is extraordinary when you think of the place the comic song had in our culture for so long. The music hall and the comic song were



Miles Kington

almost synonymous, and Gilbert and Sullivan weren't half bad either, but even when the music hall had faded away the idea of the comic song persisted. The line continued through the Western Brothers, and Arthur Askey, and Noel Coward, and Paddy Roberts, and Tom Lehrer, and Flanders and Swann, and ...

What happened to it after that? Where did it go? I grew up in a house full of old 78s of songs, some classical, a lot by Bing Crosby and a good few by comic performers such as Arthur Askey and Frank

Crumit. Because my Aunt

Peggy lived out in the Bahamas we also bad records by Nassau's favourite calypso singer, Blind Blake, and one of the first songs I got to know by heart was a comic item about the Abdication: It was love, love, tove alone, Caused King Edward to leave de throne

While we are wandering through the swamps of childhood nostalgia, I realise now that I first heard of the name of millionaire JP Morgan through a Blind Blake song:

My name is Morgan. But it ain T JP. There ain't no bank on Wall

That belongs to me. So forget your champagne appetite 'Cos the best you'll get is beer tonight, My name is Morgan,

But it ain't IP.

The point I'm getting round to is that we don't seem to breed songs like that any more. Is there anyone around who makes a living out of singing funny sungs, or is famous for singing unnry songs, or has had a bit with a funny song recently? In the cabaret world there's Kit and the Widow, I suppose, and

Instant Sunshine, but there's nobody in mainstream comedy that I can think of off-hand who sings comically Is it our culture that has decided to eliminate the comic song? Is it the industry that now makes it impossible for people to have one-off hits like "The Laughing Policeman" or Sophic Tucker's "Life Begins at Forty", or Leslie Holmes's "He Played His Ukulele as." The Ship Went Down"? When Arthur Askey sang, in his "Bird Song":

I wish I were a ring bird. I'd sing through sun and Jog. I'd lightly trip from swig to...

And back from twog to Oh, I would be a chronic

little bird, Cyclonic little bird, Carry-on-ic latte bad. A let's-have-another-ginand-torac little bird What lives up in the sky When Arthur Askey was

waxing such deathless lyrics, i bet it never occurred to him that one day nobody would be singing any silly songs at all. I only hope some overinformed reader will write and tell me I am quite wrong.



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Sicking Blown!

hlah, blah, yawn. Meanwhile, outside the airconditioned, sanitised, seem-ingly underground and nh-sonesslike Swiss conference centre, the mountains and the snow-covered slopes beckon. The sun is shining, the air is pristine clean and the cloudless sky so blue you can almost feel the proximity of the stars.

This is Davos, a ski resort in the Swiss Alps, which annu-



Jeremy Warner

ally at this time of year plays host to the World Economic Forum, Europe's premier networking conference for businessmen and politicians.

For some, the temptation of the slopes proves too strong and a week that began filled with good intentions, an early morning rise and the frantic writing up of notes on all those hurning global issues gives way to a good old-fash-ioned skiing holiday. For oth-ers, hobnobbing with leading business and political leaders, getting up to date on all the latest corporate and market trends, is what it's all about and their time is spent in an orgy of back-to-back meetings and conference sessions.

Whatever his fancy, the businessman goes away from the World Economic Forum feeling that much better about himself, the world, his company and life in general. As well he might, having spent upwards of £15,000 of his

company's money to be here.
This is a conference divided into those who pay (the great bulk), those who don't pay (the experts in their field and the media), and those who get paid (the moderators whose joh it is to liven up the sessions, summarise, be provocative and amusing). The sessions, lunches and dinners range from the obvious - the impact of the euro on husiness. Japan's eco-nomic crisis, the Internet society and the like - to the faintly irrelevant - power couples, genetic testing, development of the hrain, global a nice little mountain restauoutpourings of popular sci- gentle blue run to Klosters....

ence and sociology. It is also hard to know quite how another thundering speech from Yasser Arafat on the PLO's struggle for liberation prepares the average European or American business man for the inevitable vicious round of renewed downsizing he's going to push through the moment he gets home. Combined with a handshake over the conference table with Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, it none the less all contributes to the general sense of wellbeing, reconciliation, global-isation, integration, and not least, importance, which are

the hallmarks of this event. It is hard to know whether the all-pervading sense of optimism that surrounds Davos is down to the unreal nature of the surroundings and the event, or whether as we approach the millennium there is genuine cause for hope. Certainly, the busi-nessman's world view appears to be emerging from the confusion of the post-war years

largely triumphant. It is not just husinessmen and financiers who now preach the cause and merits of free trade, globalisation, deregulated labour markets. entrepreneurialism, and sound public finances. Most central hankers and politicians the world over bave begun to sing from the same hymn sheel loo.

There's nothing to decide here, other than who you go to lunch with, for this is in essence just a high-powered talking shop. But talk has its uses. Ian Harvey, chief executive of BTG, the patent protection group, comes because in a few days he can get through more meetings with contacts and clients than several months of international travel would achieve. One of the sessions a few years back - on visionary companies -provided the basis for a whole new strategy and culture for his company (which, by the by, was the best-performing share on the London stock

Even John Neill, chief executive of Unipart and an unreconstructed Eurosceptic, finds an unlikely platform here to sound off, as only he can, on the iniquities of the Social Chanter

It is hard to know whether the conference's reputation for deal-making is any more than just hype, but behind the official programme there is a raft of other sessions in constant progress where transactions and strategies are at least conceived, even if they are never acted upon.

The conference has also been responsible for some genuine international initiatives and reconciliations. The World Trade Organisatinn. for instance, grew out of dis-cussions initiated at Davos.

Now about hunch ... there's



It is fashionable to say the big parties are the same now. The Wirral proves otherwise

A much meaner tribe

same, all the same, all the same," said an woman in a white felt hat. She was watching Michael Portillo perched on a bench inside the bus shelter in the town centre of Heswall, in the constituency of Wirral South, where the byelection will be called today. Beaming and mugging for the cameras, tossing his quiff, be had a well-tailored arm draped patronisingly round the gawky local candidate. The woman, a

oon-voter, sbook her bead in

disgust at the spectacle. Every weary canvasser knows that cry of contempt from the we-don't-votes and the bug-ger-off-oul-of-its, the mad, the sad and the stupid. But now you the foyers and the galleries, the histros and trattorias of the bien-pensant metropolitan intelligensia: They're all the same. Why bother? What does it matter which party wins if they're all Tories anyway?" With Labour within an inch of victory, now they shrug and turn away: "All the same, all

the same How wrong they are. Watching Michael Portillo charm his way around the room at a house meeting in the most exclusive part of the constituency, a tribal homeland of conservatism, these are either your people or they are not. Never mind the five pledges or the position papers, the mani-festos or the latest Big Idea, in the end, it's the tribe that counts - them and us.

How he charmed them! The tribe sighs and leans towards him, like reeds bending to the been Conservative for ever!"

"Ye-es!" "Absolutely yes!" they murmur, a soughing of satisfaction rippling through the gathering to the clink of tea cups and crystal sherry glasses. How he titillates with talk of law and order, loyalty and royalty. How he crooms to them of assisted places, grammar schools and prisons - and the constant refrain of Dangerl Danger! Danger! The threat is to Ours, Us, People Like Us, Nice People with Nice Habits, Our Tribe.

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among his own kind, well away from Labour's tribal lands, the council estates of Bromborough or the western wards. The Defence Secretary knows his own because Tory faces in the salons and the wine bars, light up as they see his shim mering celebrity approach them in the street. (Others not his kind, turn sharply away. Perhaps it is the fruity voice, the hair or the electric smile - but what pleases most is the tribal confidence with which he welcomes each one of them warmly as One Of Us.

What is it to be One of

Yes, hut why? Prodded, they will give other reasons; "I don't like that single currency, for one thing," says Mrs Scales.
"Labour has nn experience of government," said another. "I don't trust that Tony Blair," said a young woman; while a man in a gold-huttoned blazer opined, "They'd hand it all over to the unions again." One woman

Strolling down the Heswall shopping street or bere in the house of the faithful, he was

Them? I stopped and asked a score of dazed admirers in his wake, why are you a Couservative? First they look astomshed by the daft question. Why breathe? Why live? "I always have been, all my family, always," one says, and is then stumped - the first response is always from the tribal gut. Alleen Scales in the house meet-ing replied smartly, "My great great-grandfather worked for Lord Derby in Liverpool. My



Polly Toynbee

said, "Labour is all Scots. Now I've nothing against Scots in their own country but why should they come down here ruling us?" They talked of the economy, Europe or the grammar schools. But in truth they were searching around for excuses - because the obvious truth is never spoken in polite

No, it is not a simple matter of class, though class comes into it. As it happens, if asked to pick out the Wirral South Labour and Tory candidates from an identity parade, most would get it wrong: Les Byrom, the Tory leader of Sefton council, a surveyor by profes-sion, is secondary-modern educated, badly dressed, talks with been a diplomat in China for many years, was head of the DTI for the region until recently and is so new Lahour that he only joined the party nine months ago. David Blunkett has been

appalling jokes. Ben Chapman

for Labour is dapper in a dou-

hle-breasted navy bluc pin-

stripe suit and nippy black moc-casins, speaks BBC RP, has

down here to swear his allegiance in blood to the wonderful grammar schools of the Wirral, because the Tories are blitzing the place with stories that Labour will turn them all comprehensive. Hard to know wbo is lying the hardest. As it happens the Tory candidate was a victim of the gram-

some 15-year-olds who had also failed the 11-plus. Did it burt? Yes, badly, painfully, when their friends whisked off to grammar school Did failing hurt Les Byrom? He turned glassy eyed when I asked him to cast his mind back: "I don't remem-ber." As if. Everyone remembers that, for ever. That is why supporting the grammar schools may not be good policy - two-thirds of the children

here fail and are cast among the goats. But never mind, People Like Us believe in the selection of the fittest. People Like Us just assume that it will be Our children that get selected. No, the real hut never spoken reason that People Like

Them vote Conservative is because they want to hold no in what they have got, get more. and give nothing to anyone else - except their nld clothes a Merseyside accent (where they call Blair Bhurr), has a bit to the charity shop. The Con-servative tribe is the clan of

ness of spirit is their guide, suspicion of others, a desire to stop things, lock people up, shut out the poor, build partitions and blame the underdog. It was ever thus. On the other side - Labour or Lib Dem - are those who try to be nicer than them. To be

of a charisma deficit and makes Haves and Wannahaves, Mean-

sure, large numbers may vote out of class self-interest -Labour has always done more for the lower-income groups and no doubt will try to do so again. But all through the ranks of the Labour/Lih Dem tribes the talk is of higher things, of generosity, concern. projects for the improvement of society, aspirations and good

intentions. The problem for Labour is mar school system. By the bus how to pretend to be like them. tribe knows its own and they can smell out this Labour lamb in wolf's clothing. For all their Tory policies, new Labour. thank God, just is not Tory, however much it tries to growl and bark and hnwl like them. No doubt Labour is set to win the Wirral for there are plenty of angry Tory voters there who want to give their own party a kicking for inchoate and essen-

Europe or just fury at the chaos among the leadership. The question is, come the general election, will tribal loyalty and fear of the other clan send them scuttling back?
After all, 80 per cent of the

is a ditherer, they want out of

voters never change. Most of us know which tribe we are. The hattleground is fought out among the relatively few memhers of the Don't-know-don'tmuch-care clan, who are stupider and worse informed than the average voter, an unsatisfactory bunch in whom to vest the future of the nation, but there it is. As for those other disaffect-

eds - the metropolitan intelligensia who airily say the parties are now all the same - I suggest they should spend a little more ne with the other clan in order to remind themselves. Had they sniffed the air of Portillo's house meeting, they would have left feeling considerably less angry about Gordon Brown's income tax pledge, or Jack Straw's children's curfew or even Blunkett's grammar schools. Whatever else Labour may be, they are not the tribe that has ruled over us in selfishness, meanness, greed and tially illogical reasons - Major spite for the past 18 years.

Dangerous days on the cyberfrontier

F or connoisseurs of business stories, the burgeoning geoning computer market and the Internet provide the finest. The rise and fall of entrepreneurs and their companies is oo a grand scale. It reminds one of the history of the city states of ancient Greece, with repeated episodes of conquest, battle, setback, regrouping and for-

ward again. We have Microsoft, trying to secure the begemony of the centire area. In contrast, there is Apple, admired and even loved for many years as Microsoft never bas been, now pnying the price for a decade of complacency. Then comes forward a new hero, Netscape, which quickly dominates methods of browsing the Internet, hut soon finds itself beset with ferocious enemies. In the past few days, all eyes have been on America Online (AOL), the largest Internet access provider in the world (eight million customers, compared with CompuServe's two mil-

lion). Even eight million customers, however, does not make a profitable business. AOL's policy has been to provide Internet access cheaply, hring in ever more customers with non-stop heavy advertising and keep expanding until it has an audience similar in



Andreas Whittam Smith

In the new world of the Internet, the best and the worst of American business is on view

come the hig reward – abun-dant, lucrative advertising on AOL's service. Even though its customer base has risen from 150,000 subscribers five years ago, it remains a long way short of its objective.

I first thought there was something wrong last autumn when the company was forced to recalculate its profit-andloss account. It had not been fully counting as a running cost its heavy spending on advertising. When this was done, contrary to what had previously appeared, it turned out that this celebrated company had never made a gennine profit, not a single cent. In effect, shareholders had always made good its deficits.

The share price halved. Then last December, Amexica Online wenl for broke. Much smaller competitors had introduced a new charging system that provided unlimited access to the Internet in return for a flat fee. (This remains an industry in which small companies often provide a better service than the market leaders and still survive. This is true even of assembling computers). The giant felt it must respond aggressively. AOL matched the flat fee tariff and launched an advertising blitz. they were simply staying on all Relying on the fact that local

size to a television network's. calls in the US are free, it told Then and only then would potential subscribers: "No more watching the clock or rushing off-line to beat the charges, you can stay nn-line as long as you want."

For a week or two, it looked as if the new tactics were succeeding. Whereas last summer the company's subscribers had been spending 30 million hours a month hooked up to the service, in December 102 million hours were recorded. And an additional 500,000 customers were signed up during that month alone. Then disaster struck.

America Online was not able to handle the tidal wave of custom it had generated. Many subscribers could not get through. This was not just frustrating for Weh surfers. Small husinesses found that they could not retrieve their email - nor could they quickly switch to a rival service hecause the husiness cards they had been handing out carried their AOL e-mail address. They lost orders. They became desperate. The chairman of the company, Steve Case, had to write to subscribers to retreat from the recent advertising message. He said that many users were so worried about not being able to get on the network that the time. "While that is underproblematic at another." AOL's attempt at stahilising

the situation deservedly failed. What happened demonstrates hoth the worst and the best of the American way of doing business. The company's first response was hard-nosed to a

fault. It would suspend its television advertising campaign; this saves America Online lots of money but is literally of no interest to existing subscribers. It would increase its spending on system capacity from \$250m to \$350m; this will take months to make a difference. And it would add a further 600 customer support representatives to the 3,900 already in the field - so customers are more likely to find somebody to whom they can complain. As for compensation for losses that would be considered on a problem of consumer abuse so case-by-case basis. In other words, the company was going to make it as hard as possible for subscribers to gel any

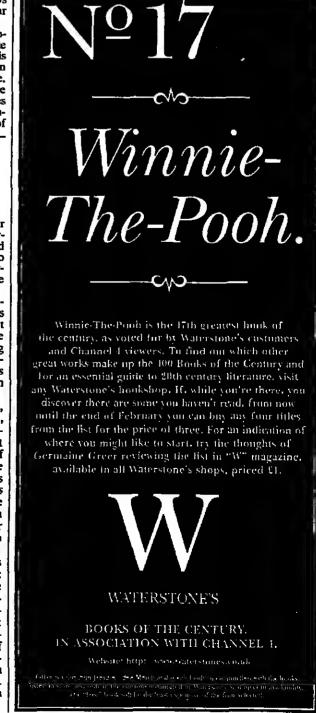
money back. This miserly response was quickly swept aside. Frustrated customers reached for their lawyers. They swiftly brought the company to a more reasonable position. The attorneys-general of more than 30 secure a settlement. They

standable at one level", Mr made it plain that, in their Case wrote, "it is obviously view, AOL's aggressive marketing campaign, combined with the frequent failure to supply the advertised new service, amounted to deceptive husiness practice.

Faced with this the company agreed to make refunds on a specified basis, and it accepted that for the time being any company advertising must "clearly and conspicu-ously" state that customers may encounter delays when going on-line.

Thus without much ado. without fresh legislation. legally enforced consumer protection was swiftly brought into the frontier territories of cyherspace. It is fashionable here to decry the litigious nature of American business practice. But it is inconceivable that UK law could have been brought to bear on a similar swiftly and effectively.

As for America Online, its chairman remains unrepentant: "When the dust settles, I believe America Online will be recognised as a service that can handle millions of people and that millions want to use. And pricing for unlimited use is part of reaching a mainstream audience". That's chut:pah, Yiddish for shameless audacity or gall. US states worked together to The ancient Greeks also had a



George •

Goyder

distribution of newsprint in

Britain for the duration of the Second World War. "A brilliant

success," said Lord Cammee af-

ter the war. Justice and effi-

ciency were the company's

objectives, and these were to be the twin themes of Goyder's

business philosophy.

His books The Future of Pri-

vate Enterprise (1951), The Rest

sponsible Company (1961) and

The Just Enterprise (1987) ex-

plored these themes; their ideas

often seemed too radical for the

corporate palate. In his last months Goyder was delighted by

the growing interest in the work

of the Centre for Tomorrow's

Company, which owes a big intellectual debt in Goyder's

Outside Goyder's business

and writings, the Church of

England was central to his life.

and he was one of the architects

Mollie **Panter-Downes**

A Londoner by birth, Mollie Panter-Downes was a New Yorker writer for 50 years. In the 1930s she sold the magazine a few poems, some short stories, and a piece about Jewish refugee children coming to England. In 1939, with war approaching. the best: "In the spring, a young Harold Ross, the editor, was desorted the best: "In the spring, a young or old Englishman's fancy lightperate to find a Loudon correspondent, and his fiction editor, the redoubtable Katherine White, suggested Panter-Downes.

On 2 September, a cable arrived at Roppelegh's, the old house where she, her husband Clare Rohinson, and their two small daughters lived in the Surrey countryside near Haslemere, asking her to try doing a regular "Letter from London". Panter-Downes cahled back: sorry, evacuees were being billeted on her, no time for writing. But then the evacuees were cancelled - Roppelegh's was in the backwoods, too far from the local school - and Panter-Downes cabled again: yes, she'd have a go. The arrangement

Thereafter, weekly or fortnightly, for the duration, a London Letter came out of Roppelegh's, Robinson was in the Gunners, a nanny helped a V-1 in 1944. In the fine New with the children. Panter-Downes went up to town for several days mid-week, staying at the Lansdowne Club, and then back home put together some 1,500 words. The typed copy was taken several miles to the nearest station, often by Panter-Downes herself on a bicycle, and given to the train guard who at Waterloo handed it to a Western Union representative for cahling to New York. There it needed almost no editing - Panter-Downes's writing, even when not sent hy cahle, was concise.

So the readers of the New Yorker learnt about the war in England, from the Dad's Army days to rockets. They read of the nntable plant crop of 1939, the evacuation of peis as well as children, the introduction of the wheatmeal loaf. She didn't skimp the bad news - in her piece of 19 May 1940, she wrote: "It is now clear to the man in the street, reading his paper as he goes home to the neat suburban villa which may soon be matchwood, like the villas near Rotterdam and Brussels. next six or eight weeks by any means he can, several of which will be had for the population of this island." In 1940 she foresaw a four-year war. Alprescient ahout Churchill's gift for leadership, she was later caustie about his hostility to criticism and failure culties not just in terms of losses of ships or of Libyan territory but, when rubber-growing Malaya fell and January 1942 was pipe-bursting cold, in terms of no more hot-water bottles.

The effect her Letters had in Washington pre-December 1941 can only have been useful. The British temper, whether displayed in early shocks to what she called the sahih mentality, or in the huoyant response to the straight talking of Sir Stafford Cripps, found a splendid spokespersnn in Mollie Panter-Downes. Weather re-

ports might have been forbidden in England, as useful to the enemy, but New Yorker readers learnt, a week late, whether the sun shone or rain fell in London. In the bad moments she retained her humour, but also in or old Englishman's fancy light-ly turns to thoughts of invasion." Those thoughts had of course come in 1940, but this was 1942 when we were beginning to think of invading them.

A reader today of Panter-Downes's war Letters is taken back to the hlackout, to gin in short supply and not much coal in the scuttle - which, if brass, no longer had a maid to elean it. She notes the Harrods-going bourgeoisie, as short of coupons as anyone, forced to buy secondhand clothes. Occasionally her desire to give voice to the people "of all-classes" - arch-Cockneyisms overheard in bars and buses - produces what now sounds like patter for Stanley Holloway, but her willingness to seek out working-class Londoners was evident in a selfeffacing report about the family of a Wapping dustman, sev-eral times hombed out, lastly by



Yorker stable of war correspondents, which included Janel Flanner, Rebecca West and A.J. Lichling, she held her place. Her father, a colonel in the

Royal Irish Regiment, was killed at Mons early in the First World War. She and her mother lived first in Brighton and then in a Sussex village, with not much money. Seeking independence, she wrote stories and poems. Her first book was that Hitler is out to win in the next six or cight weeks by any written in 1922 when she was 16, serialised by the Daily Mail and published by John Murray a year later; it was reprinted seven times. In 1946 she wrote One Fine Day - "turning the pillow". in Virginia Woolf's words, from much fact to fiction. It is ultimately a more serone hook than Woolf could have written: team. She presented the diffi- an evocation of a single day in the life of an upper-middle-class housewife, a youngish woman going grey, shopping for grocerles, worrying about husband and child, worrying about the house and garden. Its unity and perfect limpid tone convey not only a world on the point of being lost but also the radiant relief of coming through the war. "We are at peace," thinks Laura Marshall, when she ends the sun-filled day on top of a

Sussex down. "We still stand." Panter-Downes went on writing "Letter from London" into

pieces and profiles on such subjects as the British Museum and E.M. Forster. Her England didn't really take in the Beatles. Her charming book about an Indian hill-station, Ooty Preserved (1967), and her perceptive account of the Swinhume/ Watts-Dunton ménage, At the Pines (1971), largely appeared in the New Yorker. Her loyalty to it was matched by the loyalty to her of William Shawn, Ross's successor, to whom she dedicated One Fine Day. But her writing connection with the magazine didn't long survive its takeover by Newhouse, and Shawn's sacking in January 1987. Then, she said, the New Yorker "had begun to die".

She wrote in a garden house at Roppelegh's, where she and her husband Clare lived for over 60 years. (Fieldmice now and then gnawed her manuscripts.) Roppelegh's stands in a small wooded valley, with a stream running by. It was called West End when they found it; Clare renamed it after its 1453 owner, Richard de Roppelegh. It is a Puck of Pook's Hill sort of spot, where one feels any recent cen-tury of Enlglish history might come alive. In her writing, Mollie Panter-Downes conjured much out of the creaks and silences of old houses. The interior of the Pines was like "a rich dark cake, stuffed with Pre-Raphaelite fruit". Roppelegh's reminded one of Laura's house in One Fine Day, "a tyrant house" needing care, but also a

Panter-Downes didn't talk of her childhood but often referred to her fortunate adult life: one house, one job, one hus-band. She met Clare Robinson in 1926 and married him in 1927. She used to say the main fright of her life came in 1949 when her younger daughter, upset at not going to the same school as a friend, absconded and camped out with the friend in a field near Petworth; they weren't found for eight days. At the age of 81 she was thrilled when Virago republished One Fine Day as one of their Modern Classics. She was modest about her own work - "I'm a reporter. I can't invent" - but sweetly inquisitive about that of younger writers who called and were given lunch, tea, and a go-

loving partner.

Clare's woodpile. She died at 90, the same age as Rebecca West, whose death she had written about in a New Yorker Letter in 1983. Years before, she wrote, Rebecca West had sent some fole gras, a large bottle of scent, and a French taffeta scarf to "a younger through a bad time of anxiety Panter-Downes typically didn't say, but it can be guessed who the woman was who Rebecca West thought "needed a bit of spoiling". But fortunately the bad times in the greater part of her life were not frequent. There were - and she shared them with her readers - many fine days.

ing-away present of logs from

Mollie Patricia Panter-Downes. writer: born London 25 August 1906; London Correspondent, the New Yorker 1939-87; married 1927 Clare Robinson (two the 1980s. She wrote reporter daughters); died 22 January 1997. Fletcher: presiding genius

Anthony Bailey



W. R. Fletcher

Time was when the Charing Cross Road meant the old book trade, its very centre in London. In this, Cecil Court, the broad passage that crosses from Charng Cross Road to St Martin's Lane, still has a special place for booksellers still flourish there. But once it was nothing hut booksellers.

It began in 1932, when Harold Edwards opened his shop there. Then there was Colin Richardson, George Suckling with his inexhaustible stock of prints categorised by subject, Harold Mortlake, Harold Storey and, at no 27, H.M. Fletcher. There was, in fact, no such person in the firm nor ever had been (the initials were those of the founder's daughter Helen May), but to all who went there the name stood for W. R. ("Bill") Fletcher, its presiding genius from 1946 to

Robert Fletcher began the business in Ramsgate in 1905, and there, a year later, his son was born in the back parlour of the bookshop. His father moved to Rochester and then to 6 Porchester Terrace, Bayswater, where his son joined him on his 16th hirthday. He could not wait to leave school, preferring carpentry to lessons, a choice that paid off as his father moved



shelves were always needed. There were always more books than money, 23 New Oxford Street came after Porchester Terrace, then in 1931 9 Bloomsbury Street. But the Depression had begun to bite; in 1934 the shop had to be abandoned, and after an uneasy period of trading from home the husiness was re-established as a partnership of Robert Fletcher, his hrother Alick and son William Robert, trading as "H.M. Fletcher", at 27 Cocil

Court. There was one exotic interval in this pilgrimage. The firm had supplied many of the Eng-lish books for the Parisian dealer Gumuchian's great catalogue Les Livres d' Enfance, and in 1930 his father arranged for Fletcher to spend six months working for Gumuchian. Despite Fletcher's lack of schooling, he proved to have a good ear and a quick apprehension of spoken French, a gift which was to come in useful later. He also learnt something of French taste in books, so different from English, particularly in bookbinding. All this helped to form his own taste, and gave him a good eye for French treasures lying unsuspected on

The new prosperity at Cecil Second World War came and the business was only kept alive by a contract with Associated Dry Goods, the London office of a group of American department stores who would buy any amount of leather-bound octavo volumes for furnishing purposes at a fixed price of Is 9d each. But even this dwindled by 1942, and H.M. Fletcher were forced to abandon their new premises. By this time the youngest partner had joined the RAF, and although 37 volunteered for flight-crew service, flying 35 missions over Germany as flight engineer in Lancaster

bombers: Odd moments of leave would find him at nearby country sales and bookshops, selling what he picked up to other booksellers or packing them on the mess-room table to send home to his father, now in Enfield.

As soon as he was demo-

bilised, Bill Fletcher set about

re-establishing the business, buying out his uncle and with his father as junior partner. By great good luck, when he applied for a shop in Cecil Court he was able to get no 27 hack again. The years after the war were a paradise for those who were prepared to go anywhere in search of books; Romeike and Curtice used to publish a weekly list several pages long of country-house sales, and with his great friend and neighbour, Harold Storey, and after his death in 1955 his son Norman, who had also served in the RAF, Fletcher used to travel thousands of miles each year. They became expert at reading between the lines of the terse and imperfect descriptions in auction catalogues; often they would be the only London booksellers there, and would hring back untold treasure, at imminent risk to the springs of the old grey Bentley in which

London roots, enjoyed a far wider range of contacts. In 1950 he went to Paris for the congress of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers. His long-disused French came flooding back, and he made a host of friends among the Paris dealers. The same thing happened when he went to the New York Congress in 1955. The visits were returned. and the shop in Cecil Court be-came a haven for many dealers from overseas.

He also did his bit for the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association, and despite his nat-

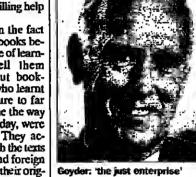
ural modesty became a popular President in 1961. In those days the association had a dinner and dance, and Fletcher's prowess in the latter was

delight to watch. But he really came into his own at the first Antiquarian Book Fair, held in 1958 at the old National Book League in Albemarle Street. It was a difficult space full of odd alcoves. With his own hands Fletcher made all the furniture, shelves and booths for it in his garage, and then spent a week putting them all up. an act of unselfish generosity which was repaid by having to repeat the performance for the next 10 years, if with willing help from colleagues.

There is an irony in the fact that, as vendible old books become fewer, the degree of learning required to sell them becomes greater. But booksellers like Fletcher who learnt on the job, by exposure to far more books than come the way of their successors today, were not limited by this. They ac-quired a familiarity with the texts of much of English and foreign literature by collating their original editions to see that they were perfect; they also developed a sixth sense for the important unknown features of books they had never seen before. All this friendliness and an honesty in all he said and did. It was these qualities that, throughout all his 70 years in the trade, brought collectors, librarians and other booksellers to him.

His long life was a singularly happy one, and H.M. Fletch-er flourishes today in the hands of his son, Keith.

Nicolas Barker William Robert Fletcher, antiquarian bookseller: born Ramsgate 6 December 1906; married 1936 Irene Weiss (one son, one daughter); died London 17 December 1996.



of synodical government. In his writings and speeches on the Church, as with husiness, it was Goyder's fate to he a genthinking, something which must have been frustrating for him and irritating for his contemporaries.

Goyder also set about becoming a serious collector of rare and important books, and hecame an expert on the literature of the English Reformation and the works of William Blake. His library included, for a time, the only known copy of the Book of Common Prayer printed in 1572 and an early copy of Tyndale's New Testa-ment (1536), as well as a rare copy of William Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience. He was a co-founder in 1949 of the Blake Trust and a president of

the William Blake Society. Perhaps, however, his most profound happiness came from his large and extended family. and from his wife, Rosemary. without whose unstinuing support he could not have bestrode all the worlds that he did. When he died they had eight children, 23 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He leaves behind him not only this whole tribe but the memory of a man who believed that with God's grace a man can dre anything he wants to.

Charles Handy

George Armin Goyder, busi-

Professor Rosalind Hill

Rosalind Hill was Lecturer. History Society and Editor and Reader and Professor of History at Westfield College in London University for 39 years, a wonderful teacher and scholar, and a person of exceptional charm and kindness. As a scholar she will be particularly remembered for opening the riches of medievat bishops' registers, especially those of Oliver Suttnn d Lincoln in The Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sut-ton 1380-1299 (published in eight volumes, 1948-86), and for her edition of the first chronicle of the first Crusade, Gesta Francorum et Aliorum

Hierosolimitanonen (1962). Also notable was the help and support slie gave to other scholars - in public office as Secre- approached 70) owing to a pritary (1003-73) and President (1973-74) of the Ecclesiastical

and York Society; as a member of the seminars on the Crusades

which so many enjoyed. her own research in life; and her third special interest, in the world of Bede, enabled her to lead her pupils over the Northumbrian hills. She loved the north of England - and any mountainous country so long as al lecture at Cambridge (as she

Rosalind Hill's parents were Chairman of the Canterbury at the Institute of Historical Research, which she greatly relished and which she continued to attend until a few weeks ago; and by the quiet encouragement In her teaching she brought

she could walk in it: she excused herself from my own inauguror engagement to walk in the Himalayas.

Sir Norman and Mary Hill; her father was a leading Merseyside solicitor, a notable figure in the Liverpool shipping world. In his later years he acquired a substantial house on the edge of Stockbridge in Hampshire, where Rosalind Hill herself preserved ancient tradition, when she inherited the title of Lady of the Manor. by holding the manorial court each year and sorting out local difficulties, which included geese wandering on the com-mon marsh by the River Test. Her generosity to Stockbridge is commemorated in Rosalind

residents of the village. She studied history at St Hilda's College, Oxford, and taught briefly at University

Hill House, a home for elderly

Plumb was among her first pupils. In 1937 she was summoned

to Westfield College, London, hy a telegram from the Principal, and at Westfield she worked - and also at the Institute of Historical Research in Bloomsbury - till she retired as Professor of History, after a notable spell of service as Vice-Principal, in 1976. She continued to take a deep interest in the college. She had known and preferred it as a relatively small college for women students; but she accepted its transformation when it became a mixed community in the mid-Sixties, and then (after her retirement) was juined to Queen Mary College

College, Leicester (as it - with a good grace, giving a then was), where (Sir) John helping hand to reconcile the alumni of Westfield to these For many of her friends the

house in Radlett, Hertfordshire, where she lived with two colleagues - latterly one, Gwen Chambers, a former Finance Officer at Westfield, who cared marvellously for her in the infirmities of her final years - was an epitome of the Westfield of history.

The union of enthusiasm and the warmth and charm and kindness which all who came

ocar her felt explains the spell she cast over many generations of students. She combined these qualities with discipline - some to the students, for she could correct the erring geese of Westfield as well as those of

Stockbridge; but much more to herself: in regular preparation, sheer hard work, and a punctuality sometimes disconcerting to those less disciplined. Nothing ever interfered with this reg-ularity, save an unhappy student or a sick animal.

In a delicious way, her devotion to animals and to the Middle Ages are combined in Both Small and Great Beasts (1953), a pamphlet exploding many myths about the medieval treatment of animals, which she and the great cartoonist Fougasse conspired to write for the University Federation for Animal Welfare. Quite without sentimentality, hrimful of humour, yet harely hiding a great depth of feeling and



Photograph: Yogish Sahota

Rosalind Mary Theodosia Hill, historian: born 14 November 1908; Lecturer in History, Westfield College 1937-55; Reader in History, London University 1955-71: Professor of History 1971-

nessman, social philosopher, book collector: born 22 June 1908: managing director, British International Paper Ltd 1935-71; general manager, Newsprint Sup-ply Co 1940-17; CBE 1976; married 1937 Rosemary Bosanquet y. 76 (Emerita); died Radlett. (five sons, three daughters); died Christopher Brooke Hertfordshire 11 January 1997. 19 January 1997.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adop-tions, Marriages, Deaths, Memoria-structe, Wording announcements), Memo-riam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Edisor, The Independent, I Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14
5DL, telephoned to 6171-293 2011 (anduering machine 9171-293 2012) or frued
to 6177-293 2010, and are charged at 64,50
a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette anneuncements inotices, functions, Forth-coming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing (or fased) and are charged at £10 a line, \$.5T extra. Please

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS The Princess Result Patriet. Northern Liebiliserse It soult were then Hembroniers and attended a Mass several Continuine Maching, at M. George Store, C. Edwington.

Changing of the Guard The Household Cavairy Mounted Recognition to the time Queen of the Canada those Guarde, is not

Birthdays Miss Macy Alexander, actress, 49; Mr

George Allan, former Headmaster. Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen, 61; Sir Anthony Alment, obstetrician and gynaecologist. 75; Miss Gillian Ayres, painter, 67; Mr Shelley Bernan. comedian. 71; Mr Michael Dickinson, racchorse trainer, 47: Mr Val Doonican, singer, 68; The Earl of Antrim, former Keeper of Conservation, Tate Gallery, 62; Air Chief Marshat Sir John Gingell, for-mer Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod. 72; Mr Gavin Henderson, Principal, Trinity College of Music. 49; Sir Edgar Keatinge, former MP, 92; Mr Jeremy Kemp, actor, 62: Mr James Michener, novelist, 90; Baroness O'Cathain, former managing direc-tor, the Barbican Centre, 59; Miss Elaine Padmore, director, Royal

Danish Opera, 50: Brigadier the Hon Dame Mary Pihl, former Di-rector, WRAC, 81; Mr Robert Simp-son, cricketer and manager, 61; Mr Glen Etley, ballet choreographer, 71; Mr Frankie Vaughan, singer, 69; Mr Alan Watson, chairman, Campout Alan Watson, chairman, Corporate Television Networks, 56.

Anniversaries

Births: Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, composer, 1809; Elizabeth Blackwell, first woman medical practitioner, 1821; Walter Bagehot, economist, author and journalist, 1826; Gertrude Stein. author and critic, 1874; Alvar Aalto. architect, 1898; Priants Rainier, composer, 1903. Deaths: Richard "Bern" Nash, gambler and dandy, 1762; Jo-hann Beckmann, economist, 1811;

George Crabbe, poet, 1832; John Lane, publisher, 1925; Boris Karloff (William Henry Pratt), actor, 1969; Teferi Bante, prime minister of Ethiopia, assassinated 1977; John Cassavetes, actor, director and screenwriter, 1989. On this day, the United States and Germany broke off diplomatic relations, 1917; the cities of Napier and Hastings, New Zealand, were almost destroyed in an earthquake when 256 people were killed, 1931; Berlin was bombed in daylight by the Allies using over 1,000 aircraft, 1945; the Benefux economis treaty was signed, 1958; Harold Macmillan made his "Wind of Change" speech in Cape Town,

South Africa, 1960. Today is the Feast Day of St Anskar, St Blaise, St Ia the

Virgin, St Laurence of Canterbury, St Laurence of Spoletu, Saint Mar-

garet "of England" and St Werburgs.

The following notes of judgments were prepared by the re-porters of the All England Law Reports.

European law R v MAFE ex a First City Trading Life

OBD (Laws J) 29 Nov 1996. The fundamental principles of Community law only applied to an action or decision taken by a member state under domestic law if it constituted a measure taken pursuant to Community law. Since the Beef Stocks Transfer Scheme which gave effect to the Slaughtering Industry (Emergency Aid) Scheme 1996 did not constitute

CASE SUMMARIES

3 February 1997

Community law, it was not within the scope of the fundamental principles and accordingly was not subject to the doctrine of equal treatment. Nicholas Green (Clyde & Co) for the applicants, Kenneth Parker QC (Treasury Solicitor) for the respondents.

Practice

Practice Direction No 2 of 1996 (Chancery Division: Schemes and reductions); Sir Richard Scott V-C; 27

a measure taken pursuant to The principal effect of this direction was that petitions

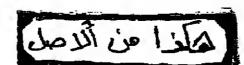
to sanction schemes would in future be heard by a judge. Chancery judges considered this change of practice desirable. Among the considerations taken into account was the fact that schemes often bound numerous persons who were not before the court. During term time petitions to sanction schemes would be listed on Mondays.

VAT

Stores plc; QBD (Keene J) 22 Nov 1996. Party trays" supplied to order in a supermarket, consisting of items otherwise sold separately in the store but arranged attractively on a disposable foil dish, did not amount to a "supply in the course of catering and were therefore zero-rated. They were not excluded from the zero-rating of food pro-vided by note 3 to Group 1 of Sch 8 to the Value Added Tax Act 1994. David Milne QC, Andrew Hitchm

(Gumett & Co, Leeds) for Safeway, Hugo Kelth (Customs & Excise).

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produce its year's results; they will be poor, prohably not much above £600m against £951m in the previous year. Few dispute that ICI is a well run company and has admirable defensive qualities. its sad underperformance stems more from factors beyond its management's control, such as a tough trading environment and the eroding impact of the powerful

The dividend should be lifted by 7 per cent to 32p. although in real values the payment will be lower than in

In group terms ICI's management must feel rather rueful when looking back at the decision, largely prompted by promising markets where the unwelcome attentions of growth is hard to achieve and

Alcoholic Beverages

standpoint it was a brillians move. As a staod-alone and paints are hardly a cockcompany Zeneca's merits as a powerful and successful player in the high flying drugs industry were there for all to see and its shares, valued at 600p for the split, have soared into the stratosphere. On Friday they reached yet another peak I,804.5p.

In contrast, poor old ICI has put oo a much more subdued performance. True, its shares have made progress since the hreak up but in more recent times their direction has been mostly downhill with the price (754.5p) a long way from the 954p peak, established early last уеаг.

It could be argued that the removal of Zeneca took away ICT's glamour. And it also left it stuck in mature, uncom-

Bulk chemicals, explosives tail for growth in the present climate; so even if ICI is over the worst it's going to be a long, hard slog with only modest

Some think the group's future is bleak. There is a school of City thought that profits will reach around £750m next year, then sag towards £400m when the world is celebrating the millennium. Strong sterling, overcapacity and little world-wide economic growth are the factors cited for ICI's future discomfort.

It could, of course, change the market's perception by barging into new areas, perhaps launching a takeover bid. Its last big strike was in the 1960s with its rip-roaring but abortive bid for Courtaulds. Certainly ICI is beginning to look as if it must stir itself – if



STOCK MARKET WEEK

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

it doesn't it will find a predator snapping at its heels. For years its performance was seen as a rough and ready guide to the state of the nation's



economy. Its quarterly figures were an important event in the investment calendar, often a significant influence in the direction of the stock market. They are still important but ICI is now a supporting player, the 40th-ranked Footsie constituent with a market capitalisation of £5.4bn.

It lags behind two other blue chips reporting this week.
BT and BSkyB and is level pegging with the fourth, BAA.
BT, like ICI, will produce its figures on Thursday - the favourite reporting day for many top groups. ICI can, however, point to tradition for its penchant for a Thursday; BT, as a newcomer, merely hopped on the bandwagon.

good would journey from their country retreats to attend board meetings in the City.

For non-executive directors week in London for a meeting held certain attractions. They could leave home on Monday, spending Tuesday doing what non-execs away from home like 10 do, attend meetings on Wednesday to rubber stamp the decisions of the working directors and then, on Thursday or Friday, make

their way home. The results of the Wednesday meeting are made known early on Thursday, although there have been odd occasions when results inadvertently slipped out on a Wednesday. BT should manage a near 7 per cent profits gain to £885m

in its third quarter. Analysis note that when presenting its interim results in November, it was in its most

Share Price Data

The Independent Index

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Thursday's popularity stems from rather more leisurely times when the great and the expected. Year's profits should come in at £3.1bn against a shade above £3bn.

It is unlikely that BT will have much to say about its planned £12bn merger with US group MCL. The proposed gettogether is currently bogged down in the cantankerous outcry which engulfs every big deal these days and is attracting the attention of an array of regulatory bodies.

The market view is that despite the howls from competitors and the scrutiny from London, Washington and Brussels the deal will get the go-ahead.

However, whether it is the best way for BT to develop in the US market is a matter of some conjecture. There is a feeling in some quarters that it is already well placed in the vast US telephone arena to take advantage of the ending of

BSkvB, deep toto digital development and with an impressive array of new allies. should produce a resounding interim profit gain - say by as much as 40 per cent to around

The satellite television station is still the main market play for investing in digital television and Neill Junor at NatWest Securities says: "Whilst we remain sceptical of the group's fundamental long-term value, we do not see it as appropriate to reduce holdings in the short

BAA, formerly the British Airports Authority, is due to land with third-quarter figures today. Like BT, the dark cloud of a Labour Party windfall tax

But trading should be going well. It has survived in fine shape its last regulatory review and profitability should be on a rising trend. Nine-month figures of £392m compared with £361m is the expectation.

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Prime Discount Fed Funds





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business & city

ScotAm scorns 'stop the clock' plea

Clifford German and Chris Godsmark

Scottish Amicable, the life insurer, yesterday rejected as "sheer lunacy" a demand from Abbey National that it postpone its controversial plans to end its mutual status as the war of words between the two sides

Abbey's call came after Scot-Am executives, led by chairman Sandy Stewart, rejected the banking group's surprise £1.4bn takeover offer, prompting spec-ulation of a bidding scramble by

Printing and posting docu-ments to its 1.1 million policyholders could cost at least £1.5m, Abbey said, and might have to be repeated several times if a contested hid hattle developed. An Abbey spokesman said: 'As far as we're concerned it's in the best interests of policyholders for ScotAm stop the clock and propose the

As pressure mounted on SeotAm's board last night, a mass of new names were being thrown into the ring as possible bidders. Prudential, the UK insurance giant and Allianz of

have made approaches, though at this stage they are thought to he tentative.

Other potential suitors in-clude ING of the Netherlands, and Australia-based AMP, which already owns Pearl Assurance and London Life. AMP has talked of doubling its UK business over the next five years. Valuations of up to £2bn have already been bandled about in

connection with ScotAm. ScotAm last night rubbished Abbey's request that work nn the circular documents to policyholders outlining the demu-

tualisation plans he put on hold. It's hysteria. This is sheer lunacy," said a source. "They cannot seriously believe that a few hundred pounds is enough to persuade our policyholders to drop everything. This is a ploy hy Abbey to destabilise our

own proposals. We've yet to see a sensible offer from them." Abbey responded furiously: "If we haven't put an offer to them then what on earth were directors rejecting last Thursday night when they vetoed our

A key factor is likely to be

investing in Scottish Amicable rewarding policyholders with with-profits policies decide to average bonuses of £250. press for a special meeting of rebel policybolders if directors refuse to enter into serious talks with Abbey or other bidders. One of the trusts, Scottish Value Management, has already said it wants to see full details of all rival proposals before taking a decision on ScotAm's plans.

Abbey National trumped ScotAm's own proposals to abandon mutual status in May and embark on a leisurely process towards floating in whether three investment trusts three to five years' time,

credited to the value of their policies. Abbey National has of-Corporate finance departfered an average of £360, payable upfront in cash or shares, and looks set to go

higher if rivals come forward. The terms and conditions offered to Scottish Amicable's executives and staff will also play a part. Abbey's policy when it floated in 1988 and again when it took over the N&P building society last year has been to delay the offer of options to executives for two years, but other hidders may be more generous. among the 2,000 staff.

ments around the City are anticipating a race to bid for the dwindling band of mutual insurance companies, bringing a fee bonanza for firms who pick up lucrative contracts to advise bidders and defend the victims. Apart from Scottish Amicable, Scottish Life, Scottish Provident and Friends Provident are all potential targets, and demand could spill over into quoted insurance companies.

Imports in front as car sales

Chris Godsmark

The continuing boom in car imports into the UK fuelled a strong increase in sales las month, though Ford's slice of the crucial British market fell again, manufacturers will reveal this week.

Early indications from in dustry sources suggest more than 200,000 cars were registered in January, a rise of some 4.5 per cent on the same month in 1996, making it the strongest January since 1990. The official statistics will be released on Thursday by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and

Traders. However, January was a had month for traditional high-selling "British" makes. Ford's share is thought to have slid alarmingly to 19 per cent, down from 21.7 per cent in January, the previous year. Rover man-Wemy Warner Warts aged just 9.6 per cent of the UK market, more than 1 percentage point down.

One industry expert said: January will be a real test of Ford's new policy of not distorting the market by registering large numbers of cars to dealers in the last couple of days of each month. If they end up with figures as bad as this it'll prove they've given up buying market share.

The winners in the sales league last month were imported makes such as Volks-: wagen, which is currently. enjoying an extraordinary surge in popularity in Britain, along with Renauli and Fiat. Last year imports accounted for 62 per cent of the UK market, up from 58.9 per cent in 1995.

The statistics make hleak reading for Ford unions as workers prepare to vote in strike ballots called over the company's plans to slash 1,300 obs at its Halewood plant on Merseyside. Union officials from across Ford's European empire meet in Brussels today to discuss the cutbacks at the start of a week of frantic

Iobbying.

Tony Woodley, national organiser for the Transport and General Workers Union, said: We are hoping our European colleagues will come out with a common position and will offer to share some of the grief. They've done it before." On-Thursday Ford's British unions will meet Jac Nasser, head of the

Mr Woodley will also discuss. the cutbacks with Greg Knight, with the Industry Minister, this week in the hope that the Government may agree to Ford's respectively ment may agree to Ford's respectively from in the ford of the fo quest for an estimated £70m in slate subsidies to guarantee; Halewood's long-term future.
The issue has become politically. charged as the main parties; campaign in the Wirtal South

by-election. Yesterday Ford dismissed speculation that it was about to nnounce the closure of another British plant. Unions believe the Southampton factory, which makes Transit vans, may ultimately face the same fate as Halewood, though no final decisions have been taken by management.

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British Gas £50 call-out angers rivals

Chris Godsmark **Business Correspondent**

British Gas has become embroiled in a new row with rival suppliers, this time over the ensis of administering prepayment meters in poorer households, which the Gas Consumers Council has warned could threaten the success of domestic competition.

Suppliers have been asked by British Gas to pay £50 for each emergency visit it has to make to homes with pre-payment meters, which are managed by TransCo. the company's pipeline division. Managers have become alarmed at the rising cost of administering the system, called Quantum, which is used by 800,000 households in

the UK. Under the system, customers charge up a smart-card with gas units at Post Offices instead of feeding coins into meters. Last year Quantum homes were responsible for 124,000 emergency call-outs, many of which aimed to have been unnecessary. The new charge could net British Gas more than £5m a year in extra revenue.

"There are some people with pre-payment meters who think they can get some extra gas by calling TransCo out. We have to run an emergency service which is cost-effective," said a TransCo

spokeswoman. However, new gas suppliers stampeding into the competitive residential market claim the call-out fee will wine out any profit made from pre-payment customers. In trials of domestic competition in the South-west.

prices offered for Quantum homes have been around 20 per cent bigher than those for ordinary households.

The Gas Consumers Council has warned that the fee would encourage new entrants into the competitive market to "cherry pick the best customers. The GCC is already concerned ahout the marketing frenzy under way in the second set of trial areas, where several companies are engaged in doorstep selling campaigns, Competition starts in Avon and Dorset next week and in Kent and Sussex from March.

Under licences issued by Ofgas, the industry regulator. new suppliers have in offer gas to any customer, regardless of income. Sue Slipman, GCC director, explained: "We know that cherry picking is happening and as soon as we get evidence we'll catch these companies out. This is a flagrant breach of licence conditions set by Ofgas."

One independent gas company. Calortex, has already raised concerns with TransCo about the call-out charge, Calortex, a joint venture between Calnr and Texaco, has so far signed up 2,200 pre-payment meter customers in the South-west trial, some 80 per cent of all those Quantum households whn have switched from British Gas.

Tomorrow the Office of Fair Trading is to hold a private conference with Ofges and other industry experts to discuss the marketing problem. Ofgas has so far rejected the GCC's call for it to police a mandatory code of practice. The electricity watchdog. Offer, has also agreed to attend the gathering.



The latest poster campaign (above) by Bell Cablemedia, one of the UK's leading cable television and telephone operators, is being investigated by the Advertising Standards Authority, writes Chris Godsmark. A previous poster, entitled "British

Telecon" has already incurred the wrath of BT's lawyers. Now a member of the public from Leeds is believed to have complained about the new slogan to the authority. An ASA spokeswoman said: "Our code of practice makes clear that

advertisers cannot denigrate their opponents or unfairly attack or discredit other businesses. You also cannot exploit the goodwill attached to a frademark." Bell Cablemedia was unavailable for Photograph: Emma Boam

Nationwide may offer Internet service

Nic Cicutti

Personal Finance Editor

Nationwide Building Society is considering plans to set itself up as an Internet service provider. challenging existing commercial providers who traditionally control access to the world-wide web. Among the options being

considered by the society are the offer of free or cheap access to its members, possibly restricting

the service to certain customers. But it has not ruled out mounting a direct challenge to service providers, such as Pipex, Virgin or Demon, by marketing cheap access to the Internet to all potential clients.

its move raises the prospect of a bitter price war, as increasing numbers of institutions move to challenge existing providers hy offering access as a simple bult-on service.

nancial services institutions have set up "home pages" on the Net, providing information about their services to surfers. These include share information, mortgages, bank charges and fund managers' performances.

Barclays bank has gone one stage further, by setting up an on-line "shopping mall" through which one can visit a

Nationwide's move comes as increasing numbers of UK fi-a range of goods. a range of goods. Last month, Royal Bank of

Scotland announced that h will offer banking on the Internet, claiming that it had cracked the problem of providing adequate security for users.

Up to now, the traditional mechanism has been to use a service provider to display a site on the Net, which can then be

visited by any number of surfers.

who themselves access the Net via a service provider. The standard charge for access to the Net ranges between £8 and £12 per month, with

callers paying additional phone charges at a local rate. A Nationwide spokesman said the plans followed its move to expand its PC banking operation, which doubled to 10,000 after a simple mail-out. No firm

decision has yet been taken. group's European operations, which lost a total of £180m last

Ministers in dole queue wrangle

Diane Coyle Economics Editor

Employment have come under pressure from ministers to make sure a positive gloss is put on anemphyment figures due to be released next week. Employment Minister Gillian

Officials at the Department of

Shepherd is said to be concerned that the Government is not getting the credit for big drops in the number of people claiming unemployment benefit City expects rate rise after the election

The Chancellor of the Exchequer

will resist raising interest rates

ahead of the general election.

forcing a sharp post-election rate

increase, the City has concluded,

Kenneth Clarke is not ex-

pected to take the advice of

Eddie George, Governor of the

Bunk of England, to raise rates

at their regular monthly meet-

ing on Wednesday. This is de-

spite the fact that the pound's

writes Diane Code.

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that the figures are fiddled. Officials have held several meetings to discuss the issue in the past two weeks.

The news has emerged days after a row over the withdrawal of a chart showing NHS spending falling rather than rising in real terms from the annual statistical reference book Social Trends. The publication is not being distributed until a new chari can be included.

A government decision in

exchange rate, the Chancellor's

main rationale for ignoring Mr

George last month, has fallen

significantly during the past

week as the markets have re-

alised that interest rate policy is

on hold until after the election.

predict sharper base rate rises

ater as a result of Mr Clarke's

likely inaction. David Kern.

chief economist at NatWest

Bank, says: "The growing like-

Two reports published today

because of the widespread view. October not to authorise a more reliable series of unemployment statisties, based on a monthly survey, but instead to stick to the claimant count, has backfired. Since the decision, which flew in the face of all expert advice, commentators have increasingly focused on the ex-

isting quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS). Part of the reason is that the introduction of the Joh Seckers' Allowance has distorted the claimant count by a large but

tihood that underlying inflation

will remain above the 2.5 per

cent target indicates that pro-

nounced post-election base rate

Michael Dicks, UK economist

at Lehman Brothers, reckons people will give the Chancellar

the benefit of the doubt. But he

too predicts that sterling will

weaken and that market senti-

ment will turn sharply after the

rises will be required."

two months. The headline claimant total fell by more than 95,000 in November and 45,000 in December, well above the carlier trend of 15,000-20,000 a When the first figure was

published in mid-December the Government was so thrilled that five ministers - including the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Deputy Prime Minister - gave a hasty press conference to highlight the drop in unemployment. How-ever, the Office for National Statistics said then that because of the uncertainties about special factors it was unable to provide its usual estimate of the unemployment trend for the

second month running. Critics of the Government were delighted - and ministers infuriated - that City experts and journalists opted to analyse the latest quarterly jobless figures, collected on the same basis as most other countries' statistics, rather than the claimant count.

Duncan Lewis in talks about senior BT job

Michael Harrison

Duncan Lewis, who quit as head of Granada's media division in December after a spectacular bust-up with Charles Allen, its chief executive, may be set for a return to the telecommunications industry with his old employer British Telecom.

The 45-year old Mr Lewis is understood to have held in-formal discussions with the BT chairman Sir Iain Vallance about taking up a senior post within the company as it works towards the £35bn merger with MCI of the US.

Mr Lewis has worked for both Mercury and BT before indeed it was Sir Iain who brought him into the group. The two men are said to have had a good working relationship.

Friends say that Mr Lewis is weighing up three options - a return to BT, a job running an FTSE 100 company or launching a start-up venture on his own. But a return to BT is top of the agenda.

Industry observers say that a power vacuum may be developng at the top of Concert - the international telecoms company being formed out of BT's takeover of MCI, the US's biggest long-distance telephone

Dr Alan Rudge is retiring at the end of the year as deputy chief executive of BT, which only had four executives on its board before the merger with MCI. There is also speculation about how long the chairman of MCL, Bert Roberts, will remain on the board of the merged company given the enormous stock options that he is in line for, The deal will net him \$50m-\$60m according to some estimates.

However, Mr Lewis has a rep-utation for falling out with his bosses. In 1995 he quit as chief executive of Mercury after just

parture from Granada came within a year of his appointment.

Mr Lewis's departure from his £280,000 job at Granada led to speculation that he would get the top job at Cable & Wireless Communications, the new company formed out of a £5bn merger of Mercury and three cable operators.

But the post went to another Granada executive, Graham Wallace, head of the grnup's restaurants interests.

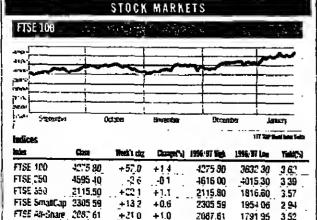
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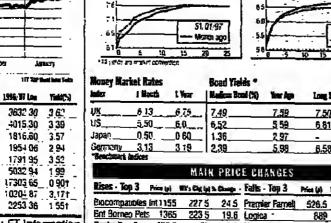
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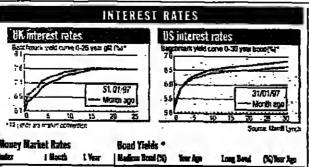
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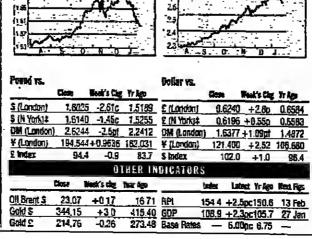


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Better than the rest: Do Tory claims stand up?

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GAVYN DAVIES

'Since the UK is still trailing at least 20 per cent behind our continental neighbours in terms of income per head, the fact that our productivity is catching up a little is not in itself a triumph'

Conservative claims that we will hear protected systems will not be able to survive repeated remorselessly between now and polling day. And in making these assertions, the Government is moving with the current tide of opinion in the chattering classes, and indeed in the financial classes, in this country and elsewhere. Anyone who has spent time talking to global investors about the relative performance of the major economies will be aware that there is now a strong bias towards believing that the Anglo-Saxoo economies, especially the UK and the US, have prepared themselves hetter for the ecocomic challenges of the next decade than either continental Europe or Japan.

This represents quite a chaoge in cooveotional wisdom. Up to the end of the 1980s, Germany and Japan were generally regarded as the success stories of the postwar era, while the Anglo-Saxon economies were seen as inflation-prone areas subject to chronically low productivity growth. It took some time to shake off this image, but the relatively strong recovery in GDP in the English speaking world in the past four years has certainly done the trick. The UK and the US are now usually described as more flexible economies (especially in their labour markets) than others in the developed world. They are viewed as attractive to inward investment, likely to produce superior returns to capital, and are held up as examples of how the injection of a free market culture can transform economic performance.

Meanwhile, Japan and the Continent

(notably Germany and France) are described as over-regulated systems which are unresponsive to market forces. As a result, they are accused of producing excessively high

in the coming decades, since footloose capital will simply migrate to those parts of the world which provide the highest returns. Finally, as an important addendum, most global investors outside Europe, though oot inside, view the European Monetary Union (EMU) project as deeply flawed, and an example of how governments on the Continent seek to impose market-constraining solutions on their economies, often without the obvious support of their electorates. There are

few powerful international financiers who

have a good word to say about

The Toyota car company went some way to puncturing these beliefs last week wheo it suggested it would prefer to invest in the highly regulated markets of the Continent rather than in the UK's haven of free enterprise if we stay out of the single currency. Toyota, at least, does not seem convinced of the overwhelming advantages of our particular brand of the free market system. But theirs seems to be a minority view, given that Britain continues to attract about half of all Japanese investment in the European Union. Furthermore, it is no longer fashionable to extol the "stakeholder" economies like Germany and Japan, instead it is thought appropriate to lecture them on how to become more like us.

Given the performance of the

so far triggered any significant rise in inflation, while the Japanese and continental Europeans have suffered from an apparently endless recession. But the key question is whether these differences in performance really are structural, or whether they are simply reflecting the fact that the Anglo-Saxon nations are more advanced in their cyclical economic recoveries than the rest of

the world. The correct answer to this question is that "it is too early to say", since we should never

Tre	nds i	n major (DECD e	conomies	
	Real GDP growth	Unemployment rate	Productivity growth	Working age population growth	inflation
Dailed States 1960-1973	4.3	4.9	2.3	1.7	33
1973-1979	29	6.8	0.3	1.7	7.7
1979-1989 1989-1998	1.9	73 6.1	1.0 0.8	1.0	5.0. 2.7 l
Japan				· . · ·	
1960-1973	8.4	1.3	· 8.1	1.7	6.2
1973-1979	3.5	1.8	28	0.8	. 82
1979-1989 1989-1998	3.9 1.6	24 20	26 - 10	. 0.9 . 0.0	.23 0.4 }
EU			1 1 1 1		
1960-1973	4.8	2.2	4.5	. 0.8	5.2
1973-1979	2.5	4.2	2.3	0.8	11.8
1979-1989	2.3	8.7	1.8	8.5	7.1
1989-1998	1.9	10.7	1.4	0.9	32
DIK					
1960-1973	3.4		.29	. 🖢	4.8
4070					

also too early tu say whether Manchester | out-performed their rivals. United or Southampton will prove to be the most successful football team of the 1990s. But sadly the evidence so far indicates that tell us about national economic performance?

The table compares the performance of the UK economy against our three main competitor blocks in four sub-periods since 1960. Examining this table, several important conclusions become apparent. The first is that the growth rate of GDP has falled

sharply in all areas, and on an al-(say) 1998, the growth rate will be roughly half that of the golden years from 1960 to 1973, and will actually be less than it was during the doom-laden years from 1973 to 1979. This is not good.

The second point to note. which is more surprising, is that the UK and the US have really performed no better in the Japan and contineotal Europe. that their growth rate has been in the region of 1.5-2 per cent per

The best economy in Europe? The most favourable economic prospects for a generation? These are the key generative claims that we will hear introduced assertance and in the control of the control of the whole of the whole of the control of the con

Third, the UK has nothing to crow about on the inflation front. Despite the almost universal belief that this is no longer a prob-Southampton have rather a lot of catching lem, the inflation rate during the current cyup to do. So what does the evidence so far i cle has been only fractionally helow 4 per cent, which is substantially higher than the rates recorded by any of the competitor economies shown in the table. Given this higher inflation rate, the "nominal income split" between inflation and real output growth in the UK has remained substantially worse than it has been elsewhere in the world.

So where is the silver lining? Encouragmost continuous basis, since the first oil shock of 1974. The UK has not managed to buck this trend.

Over the whole of the current economic cycle, from 1989 to continuous the current that the UK and the US have managed to improve their unemployment that the current cycle is the strength of the current economic cycle, from 1989 to continuous the current cycle than in the UK and the US have managed to improve their unemployment continuous basis, since the ingh, productivity growth has been higher in the UK audit in the UK and the US have managed to improve their unemployment. performances, thus reversing a 3th year upirend. Meanwhile, Japan and continental Europe have conspicuously failed in this regard So at least this aspect of the conventional wisdom seems to have been vindicated.

Where does all this leave us on the great debate? Clearly, there have been aspects of Britain's economic performance which have dramatically improved relative to the rest of the world in the last few years, but it is not present economic cycle than yet clear whether even these gains can be sustained for an entire cycle. Since the UK is Given the degree of gloom that still trailing at least 20 per cent helind our continental neighbours in terms of income economies, it really is remarkable per head, the fact that our productivity is that their grounds rate has been in catching up a little is not in itself a triumph. And to suggest that we have more to teach annum, which is little different | the Germans than we have to learn from from that mustered by the sup-posedly miracle economies in the i as it is on the football field.

Jeremy Warner hears conflicting economic viewpoints at the World Economic Forum in Davos

Clarke finds few soulmates in Switzerland

Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, is accustomed to feeling isolated and beleaguered over his pro-European views back home in Britain, so it might reasonably be expected that out here at the World Ecopomic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where all the talk is of integration, globalisation and a casting aside of national boundaries, he would feel almost wanted and at home.

Not a bit of it. Mr Clarke's recently expressed views, repeated again over the weekend, that monetary union will probably not go ahead on time in 1999 and, even if it does, most European member states will not have converged sufficiently to justify it, are about as out of nere among Europe's élite finance ministers and central bankers as his pro-European

views are in his own cabinet. Certainty is something that has come to be expected from committed federalists like Jacques Santer, President of the Euro-pean Commission, who with customary bluntness stated that the process of monetary union was now irreversible. But the case was equally strongly argued by Theo laigel, Germany's Finance Minister. Monetary union not only

ought to, he said. Rodrigo de Rato y Sigaredo, deputy Prime Minister of Spain. was equally adamant that Spain would be ready on time and he waxed lyrical about the benefits and reforms being brought about in the Spanish economy by the push to meet the Maas-

would go ahead oo time but it

tricht criteria. Jean-Claude Trichet, governor at the Bank of France, was the same. Far from reinforcing the European social and economic model, mooetary unioo

IN BRIEF

reform in labour markets, helping to make Europe competitive once more.

Mr Trichet is not a politician: central bankers are very different animals. But he was broadly singing from the same hymn sheet as everybody else. To them, Maastricht is not the straight jacket it is often depicted as in Britain, but a force for change.

Mr Clarke was not entirely alone, however. Ulrich Cartellieri, a member of the board of managing directors of Deutsche Bank, was apocalyptic in his view of monetary union. He predicted that few countries would be able to meet the 1999 deadline and he expected some sort of crisis later this year as mar-

Monetary union would be a force for change and reform in labour markets

kets came to terms with this. "I am afraid financial markets might soon begin to question whether it is smooth sailing towards the euro or whether there are obstacles in the way and we may be heading towards the rocks," he said.

Howard Davies, deputy governor of the Bank of England, is so concerned about the possible fallout in bond markets if the euro falters he believes banks should "stress test" their portfolios to ensure that capital could withstand such a crisis.

And George Soros, the cur-rency speculator and philanthropist, argues that monetary union would create irreconcilwould be a force for change and

• Esprit Telecom, the London-based pan-European telephones

operator, has confirmed plans for a public share flotation, raising

an estimated \$75m (£47m). The offer, which values Esprit at an

an estimated \$75m (£47m). The offer, which values Esprit at an estimated £481m, higher than estimates of some analysts, is on the US stock exchange and on Easdaq in Europe. Investors in the company, who include its founder and chief executive. Walt Anderson, are issuing up to 29 per cent of shares to oew investors. Esprit, created by Mr Anderson in 1991, offers services to companies in 14 UK cities in the rapidly expanding business telephory market.

• Small and medium-sized businesses have been hit by the rise in the value of the pound, a survey from the Confederation of

British Industry says today. A balance of 18 per cent of medium-

sized companies said new export orders fell over the past three

the previous three months. But the CBI also says smaller firms

months, compared with a similar balance showing an increase in

able stresses and strains all is the apparent conversion of treaty which most of Europe be- to be heading in the opposite dithroughout Europe and un-paralleled political division. A common currency, he insisted, was merely a stepping stone to fiscal and political union. Without addressing that reality, a broadly based single corrency was unworkable. There was also the irrepressible John Neill, chief executive of Unipart, who insisted that it was hard to understand how shorter working bours, longer holidays and higher social and sickness benefits

could ever hope to add to Eu-

rope's competitiveness. All these people were very much the exception, however. The general picture was one of faith in the euro and the benefits it would bring.

terms. Europeans had became unduly obsessed with the currency debate, he said. It was a mistake to believe the answer to enhance competitiveness was the elimination of an exchange rate risk. No country should go into the euro unless fully convergent, he insisted.

Convergence is more important than the timetable," he said. "Without very great struc-tural reform in Enrope we will be the old countries in decline watching the rest of the world overtaking us."
But while most of Mr

Clarke's remarks about Europe fell on deaf ears, he was in other respects preaching to the converted. There was a surprising degree of unanimity over the need for deregulated labour markets, liberalisation, privatisation, and structural reform in social and pension policy. Even Theo Waigel conceded that Britain had something to teach the rest of Europe in this department. But perhaps most striking of

Spain to the cause of labour market deregulation, Mr de Rato y Sigaredo, who also dou-bles as Spain's Finance Minister, was emphatic about the need for more flexibility in labour markets. "In our finances we need to change from a culture of in-

stability to one of stability. This must be accompanied by structural change and deregulation of the labour markets," he said.
What seems to be happening
here is that the euro's justification is being reinvented. Convergence and deregulation of

labour markets are conditions of Maastricht but the wording is vague and low-priority. Certainly they were aspects of the lieved could wait. Not any longer, it would seem. Far from being a way of safeguarding the European social and economic models, the euro is now seen as a motor for change too.

Mr Santer's view of monetary union as a way of protecting the "suitably modernised" European way seems to be an increasingly irrelevant one. Howard Davies put it best in an aside when he said that the

paradox was that economically Britain was much better prepared for monetary union than those politically committed to it. However, as Europe dashes down the road towards the American model, the US seems

rection. There was no disguising the sense of triumphalism among the large US contingent here at the performance of the American economy.

Larry Summers, the US deputy Treasury Secretary, was happy to take the credit, even though the renaissance in cor-America would seem to have little to do with the policies of his administration. None the less. he reflected a general mood of self doubt when he suggested that perhaps the US had something to learn from the Europe in dealing with its profound social problems. Competitiveness. it seems, is not everything.



Theo Waigel: Monetary union was now irreversible

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continued to outperform the rest of British manufacturing industry, with 35 per cent saying their total order books, including buoyant domestic sales, had improved. Stocks of finished goods fell at their sharpest rate since January 1993, as orders picked up. • The board split at the top of Scott Pickford, the may Croydon-

based oil exploration business, apparently deepened yesterday. The chairman, Don Scott, revealed a letter to shareholders which says the company is unable to make a judgement on the merits of two rival takeover bids, one from its would-be partner Aerodata Holdings of Australia, the other a hostile offer from Core Laboratories of the US. Mr Scott said investors should wait until the High Court rules on the validity of a complex share exchange deal proposed with Aerodata, which is offering 55p a share. Core Labs has suggested it could raise its 53p offer to 57p. Mr Scott's proposal to link with Aerodata has previously been opposed by a rival faction on the board. In the letter he admitted to shareholders that the board "does not yet feel able to advise" on either of the offers until after the Court judgement.

Babcock, the engineering group, has won a \$70m (£43.8m) project management contract with the Chinese government to help install part of a chemicals plant at a petrochemicals complex, at Lucyang in Henan Province, run by the state-owned Sinopec group. The new plant is due for completion by 2000.

Foreign shops plan invasion

Nigel Cope

Foreign retailers are planning an invasion of the UK high street with clothing stores topping the list of stores with big

Retail Report from retail consultants Corporate Intelligence, foreign clothing retailers account for just 3 per cent of all clothing shops in the UK, with chains such as C&A, Benetton and The Gap leading the way. But that proportion is tipped to grow rapidly as overseas groups gear up for big store opening

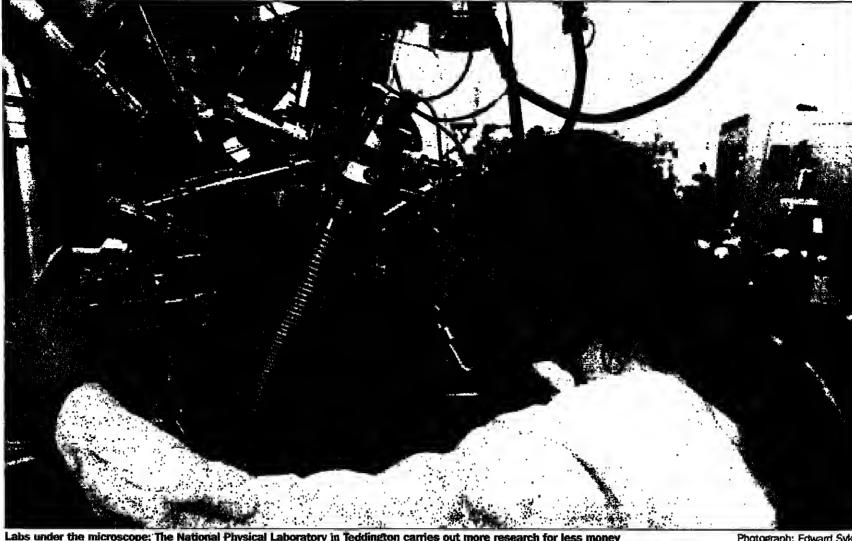
The report says that La Senza the Canadian-owned lingerie specialist, plans to increase its store numbers from 40 to 170 by 2000. It opened its first UK outlet in late 1994. TK Maxx, the American retailer which offers designer labels at discount prices, is hoping to increase its UK chain from 18 to 100 stores. Separately, H&C Furnishings, the group formed by last year's merger of Harveys and Cantors, is set to announce a new concession deal with a supermarket group, understood

to be Somerfield.

expansion plans. According to the latest UK

Yes, it hurts. Yes, it works

Last week's science page criticised the Government's policy of selling · research laboratories to the private sector. lan Taylor, minister for science and technology, writes in its defence



Photograph: Edward Sykes

crutiny, examination, change. These are the sort of words that may make us all feel uncomfortable. They can challenge our traditional way of doing things, prompt us to work out our real objectives, and sometimes lead us towards better working hahits. Although disturbing, the scruliny process often brings rewards, and gives a new sense

It is fair to say that the 37 public-sector, research establishments which have recently Prior Options Review spotlight have found the process both disturbing and challenging. But as minister in charge of the process - which has just heco formally completed - I am confident that the overall outcome will be a more efficient set of organisations, with a clear view of where they are going and who their key customers are. Our science hase will benefit from the exercise.

As reported last Wednesday, my ministerial colleagues and I have just announced the remaining 28 decisions on the scientific bodies reviewed during 1996. For the establishments scrutinised under the full programme, the taxpayer cootributes more then £690m each year to sustain their current work. That is more than 10 per cent of the total government expenditore on research and development. It is only right that the Government should make sure this money is speot effectively. The cost of undertaking the reviews has been small by

Budget-holding ministers are not the only ones who can

see the benefits of Prior links between bodies in related Options reviews. One "parent" body for three of the laboratories - the Natural Environment Research Council recently endorsed the need for periodic reviews, saying to the House of Commons Science and Technology Comvaluable insight into the struc-ture and operation of establishments, and challenge inter-nal thinking" and "give a the customer-contractor rela-

tionship". ontcomes from the reviews conducted oo a case-by-case basis, which should reassure those who have accused the Government of seeking private sector solutions regardless of the nature of the establishmeots and their work. Many will remain in the public sector, though with emphasis on managerial reforms to improve efficiency.

As for Charles Arthur's comments [actually those of John Mulvey of Save British Science - C4) on this page last week, we have indeed given appropriate weight to issues such as impartiality and relia-bility of scientific advice, as well as the moncy-related fac-

Staff at the laboratories will be pleased that the results are now out in the open. I was concerned to minimise the length of time takeo by the reviews and encouraged the teams to work quickly to identify the key issues. But these were complex, and we wanted right answers rather than quick ones, and to look at each case on its merits. We also had to exploit its unique technical and accountability in keep in mind the important assets and capabilities. My of public spending.

fields.

The labs employ many dedicated and highly talented people, working in a vast range of scientific fields. Some have a high public profile, due to their crucial contribution to the investigation of public mittee that they "provide a health concerns such as BSE or E.coli poisoning. Others-operate with little media attention, but still perform impor-tant, often longer-term, further opportunity to assess research. As minister overseeing their work, and visiting whenever possible, I can conwords "prestige, status and national pride", as suggested in

last week's article. To give just one example, the Babraham Institute, working in the hiological sciences area, has used US professionals to provide numerical data ahout its performance over the past five years. The institute has reported that on this basis it is ranked above Oxford and Cambridge in all fields of its research. Staff have also won eight "Realising our Potential Awards", recognising their efforts to achieve closer collaboration between science

and industry.
So is there life after reviews? Judging by the experience of my own department's National Physical Laboratory (NPL), which is now operated under contract by SERCO plc, there certainly is. NPL has made savings through better operating efficiency, and is able to carry out more research for the same amount of money. It has recruited 85 new staff - including 48 scientists. It also has more commercial freedom to

department has a mediumterm contract to secure the vital research we need from

Nor is Britain alone here. Other countries are also refocusing the work of their public-sector research bodies. The US government is looking especially hard at the space agency Nasa, and the energy agency Nasa, and the energy and health areas, while the Australian federal research organisation, CSIRO is reforming its institutes to reduce bureaucracy. My team in the Office of Science and Technology has received a number of delegations from abroad, keen to learn how we have tackled these difficult

Charles Arthur also mentioned the sale of the Building Research Establishmeot (BRE). Last Tuesday Robert Jones, the Minister for Construction, announced that the BRE management team has been selected as the preferred purchaser. Their hid best met all the Government's sale objectives. Careful consideration was given to the pro-tection of impartiality and independence for which BRE is renowned. I am pleased that this hid has secured wide support from the construction iodustry and the research

world. No science minister can ignore the need to investigate whether the science hase is operating efficiently or take action to halt mission drift. The Prior Options process is the sign of a responsible goverament, fully prepared to take all the necessary measures to maintain value for money and accountability in all areas

theoretically...

Should scientists, like MPs, have to declare their financial interests in: research? A study in Science and Engineering Ethics found that 34 per cent of the lead authors of 789 papers drawn from a range of journals had a financial interest in research being described. For example, the writers may have been listed as an inventor in a patent application, or as a shareholder of a company with commercial interests. But Nature reports crit-ics saying that papers should be judged on the ments of the science they describe, not by ments "alleged biases".

Students who learn through the Internet can get better results than those taught in a classroom, according to a Californian study reported in New Scientist. A class of 33 sociology students were divided into two groups for a statistics An Indian heart surgeon who tried course; the online ones scored 20 per cent better in the exam, and had collaborated more in coursework.

who have now found a gene that causes glaucoma, one of the most common causes of hlindness. Glaucoma affects up to two per cent of people over 40, and is actually a group of eye diseases that gradoally damage the optic nerve, usu-ally through raised internal pressure years in jail.

caused by excess fluid inside the eye. Mutations in the gene, called TIGR, cause a rare hut potentially devastating juvenile form of glaucoma, said a team from the University of lowa College of Medicine, reporting in the journal Sci-ence. TIGR also seems to be responsible for about three per cent of adult cases, with other, unidentified genes contributing to the rest.

That's a relief. An Ariane-4 rocket lifted off successfully from Kourou last Thursday and placed American and Argentine satellites into orbit. But the Ariane-5 rockets - the first of which blew up carrying scientific experiments just 37 seconds into its maiden flight - is in doubt. A second experimental launch will not happen until July at the earliest.

unsuccessfully to transplant a pig's heart into a human is in jail in Guwahati, Assam. The patient died soon after the operation, performed in December. Unlike the "xenotransplants" planned by More success for gene-hunters, a number of Western companies, the pig had no human genes, meaning the trans-plant would cause a massive immune rejection. The surgeon, Dhaniram Barnah, is charged with violating India's 1994 Organ Transplant Act. If guilty, he faces a fine of up to 10,000 rupees and five

technoquest

Questions and answers provided by Science Line's Dial-a-Scientist on 0345 600444

Q Why don't stars appear in pictures from the Apollo landings on the Moon?

A The lunar surface is very bright, and reflects a lot of light. The television cameras on the Moon compensated for this by reducing the amount of light let through the lens. As a result, stars were not hright enough to be seen.

Q Why, if you shut one eye, do you still see in 3-D?

A You don't, really, but your brain supplies the missing information, so you get the impression that you are still seeing an image with depth. Depth perception, still isn't fully understood, but our brain can use pictorial clues such as the angle an object covers on our retina. Other clues include the brightness of the object, if it is brighter, it will usually he nearer, so light and shade can also be important. There are also physiological clues such as when you focus on something close, the shape of the actual lens changes. To check if you are really sce-ing in 3-D when you have one eye shut. try moving your head from side to side, or touching objects at varying distances.

Q How far does the Earth travel round the Sun?

A About 570 million miles (900 million kilometres). The first measurement was made by Aristarchus of Samos in about 270BC. He measured the position of the Sun relative to the Moon when the Moon was half full. From this, he worked out the distance in the Sun (since the Earth's orbit is nearly circular, the distance travelled is 2x multi-plied by the radius). The number he got was 20 times too small, but very early. estronomers often did worse.

Q Stars twinkle because of the Earth's atmosphere. Why don't planets?

A Stars are so distant that they appear as point sources of light, so any disturbance in the Earth's atmosphere is easily visible. Planets, being closer, aspear more as a disc than a point of light. Any disturbance is less visible because if the central part of the image is distorted as it passes through the atmosphere, that distortion probably won't reach the edge of the disc – so the light than the property winds. planet won't seem to twinkle.

Q What is the strongest plant fibre?

A A fibre called ramie is the strongest. those of cotton.

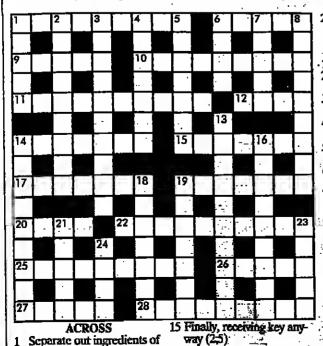
QDo fish blink?

A No. Like snakes, they don't have moveable cyclids. Instead, they have a transpareot eye protector permanently in place. Fish have excellent eyesight and can see parts of the spectrum we can't. They rely heavily on visual signals for species recognition, choosing a mate and territorial defence.

You can also visit the technoquest World Wide Web site at http://www.compus.bt. com/CampusWorld/pub/ScienceNet

Questions for this column can be submitted by cmail to christ@bss.org

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD No. 3212. Monday 3 Febru



caster-egg (9)
6 Sounds like small child may

12

9 Thorium is extracted from plant fibre (5) 10 Rita hoped to substitute

delight (5-5)

12 Hard hit region (4)

14 Don't allow for girl's energy

27 Dash up to dead antelope

and spirit (7)

way (2,5): 17 Reason general secretary is 21 Plant found in African naout of routine (7) 19 Unaffected by minor paint-

ing at first (7) 20 Mark gets the credit (4) 22 Call on editorial trouble-

28 Fighter's willing to break up a riot (9)

DOWN Arrange dance music (5) Begin working seriously to record turn over (3,4,2) All point to just what's needed (10)

A chap goes in to fillet edible sea creature (7) Many are seized by European land animal (7)
Fone created by low note

External appearance of men, say (5) Rubbish student about world power (3,6) 13 Pashionable society one takes a shine to ? (10) 14 A planist may play this game (9) 16 Atteration meant changing

patch inside (9) 18 Cast contained German doth (7) 19 Georgian lady? (7) ture reserve (5) 23 Revolutionary device

whichever wayyou look at 24 Took advantage of application date (4)



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